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First Committee

17th meeting

Wednesday, 18 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than .... (Myanmar)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Alfred (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to express its views on thematic discussion items 5 and 6, "Regional disarmament" and "Confidence-building measures".

I begin by apologizing that I limit myself to a statement about actions taken by Central Africa, the region to which Gabon belongs. In Yaoundé in July 1996, the heads of State and Government of the countries of the subregion signed a non-aggression pact that had been approved three years earlier, during a meeting in Libreville. By the terms of that legal instrument, the States of the subregion committed themselves not only to solving all conflicts by peaceful means, but to not allowing the use of their respective territories as bases from which to destabilize other States.

The countries of Central Africa periodically organize joint meetings between the ministers of defence, the interior and foreign affairs, as well as the military joint chiefs of staff and chiefs of police. For over 10 years now, we have been strengthening transparency in military activities. To that end, all the States of the subregion that intend to undertake military manoeuvres are required to notify other States, which are also invited to observe those manoeuvres.

With regard to armaments, the States of the subregion have renounced the acquisition, transport and production of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The States of the subregion have also expressed their commitment to strengthening the fight against the transfer and illicit acquisition of weapons and drugs. With the participation of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and the collaboration of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, they have organized a regional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms in Central Africa.

We should also like to thank the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, and in particular the secretariat of the Standing Advisory Committee, for their constant efforts and support in promoting confidence-building measures in Central Africa.

My delegation nevertheless regrets that because of the war which unfortunately has developed in one of the countries of the subregion, we have not been able to undertake a subregional plan to fight the scourge of destabilizing traffic in small arms.

Pursuing our policy of transparency in the area of security, the countries of Central Africa have decided, amongst other things, to develop measures to foster

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agreement on the gradual reduction of forces, equipment and military budgets in the States of the subregion. On 25 February 1999, a higher Council for Peace and Security, called COPAX, was set up in Central Africa. This is a body for political and military dialogue for the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States, for the purpose of consolidating peace and security. The Council includes the Central African Multinational Force called FOMAC, and a rapid warning mechanism for the subregion, with its headquarters in Gabon.

A number of measures have been taken within the subregion to strengthen confidence-building measures with a view to better promoting the peace and security so essential to development. Recently, a subregional conference on refugees was organized in Bujumbura. This provided the Central African countries the opportunity to review problems inherent in the management of refugees and to establish confidence-building measures between refugee host countries and countries of origin. My delegation welcomes similar measures taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and would like to recall these to the international community and various agencies of the United Nations, so that financial, technical and material support can be provided for various subregional initiatives to establish and strengthen confidence-building measures.

I should like to conclude by recalling an excellent presentation made yesterday by the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. He told us of activities being carried out by the Centre, including the collection of and search for small-arms caches with a view to destroying these weapons. The African Centre has explained its activities with regard to the reintegration of child soldiers. We believe that the international community and the countries of Africa first and foremost should help each other and provide financial, moral, material, intellectual and political resources to the Centre, whose work we consider beneficial.

Mr. Sanders (The Netherlands): As this is my first intervention, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your election as officers of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We have full confidence in your able guidance to take us through this year's session.

It is my honour to present to this Committee, also on behalf of its 97 initial sponsors, the well-known annual draft resolution on transparency in armaments, with reference A/C.1/55/L.43. Transparency in armaments is one of the major principles of confidence-building among States, which enables the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps to avoid distorted information.

It is important to note that the concept of transparency in armaments is certainly not restricted to conventional armaments only. The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as it does to conventional weapons. The Netherlands has always been, and continues to be, an advocate of greater transparency regarding nuclear weapons. The active role played by the Netherlands in this regard during the last Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference is testimony to that effort.

The Netherlands has always had great sympathy for the aim of greater transparency in the field of weapons of mass destruction. However, we do not think that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is the appropriate vehicle for reaching that goal. Therefore, the Netherlands is pleased to note that this year only one draft resolution on the subject of transparency in armaments has been presented to the First Committee instead of two, as has been the case in the past. In this regard, I should like to express our sincere appreciation to Egypt for not submitting its own draft resolution this year. It is our sincere hope that a single resolution on transparency in armaments will contribute to the promotion of universal participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mechanisms for transparency in nuclear and chemical weapons already exist. Negotiations for a mechanism for biological weapons are going on in Geneva within the ad hoc group on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. There are multilateral treaties related to weapons of mass destruction, and there will be more of them in the future. For conventional weapons, however, only limited instruments are thus far available for increasing the degree of transparency. There are arrangements for certain very specific types of conventional weapons, and for certain regions.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Ottawa Convention deal with specific types of weapons, while the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), which was fundamentally revised at the summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Istanbul, deals with a specific region. The Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions is also an important regional arrangement that deals with specific types of conventional weapons. Earlier this year, we also saw the establishment of a register and database on small arms and light weapons within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), just referred to by the previous speaker.

These important regional initiatives and arrangements on conventional armaments underpin the great contribution that regional organizations can make to the issue of transparency in armaments. Unfortunately, however, nothing comparable exists at the global level, with the exception of a modest form of international reporting on military expenditures and reporting on arms transfers and holdings on a voluntary basis.

The establishment in 1992 of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as part of a broader range of international efforts to promote openness and transparency in military matters was a step in that direction. The Register could help to prevent an excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. It contributes to enhancing confidence, easing tensions and strengthening regional and international peace and security and to restraint in military production and the transfer of arms.

Given the scarcity and the limited nature of global arrangements on major conventional weapons systems, we should do our utmost not only to protect but, more importantly, to improve and further develop the Register, in terms of both participation and scope of reporting.

The Group of Governmental Experts that convened earlier this year has prepared a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. Last week, Mr. Raphael Grossi of Argentina, on behalf of the Group, gave an eloquent presentation on their findings. One of those findings was that the Register must be reviewed periodically. We therefore support in our draft resolution the convening of a group of experts in the year 2003.

The total number of Member States that have reported to the Register at least once is still growing and now stands at 146. Of these 146 States, approximately 80 are regular participants in the Register, including nearly all the main exporters and most of the main importers of the major conventional arms covered by the Register. Overall participation in the Register continues to increase gradually. Over the years, the level of participation has remained one of the highest compared with similar international reporting instruments.

The Register thus has become reasonably well established. It has established a de facto norm of transparency in armaments which Governments must take into account. It provides a significant amount of information officially reported by Governments that otherwise would not have been available, information that provides a legitimate basis for regional and inter-regional consultations between Governments. The Register also performs an important role in public information, promoting the accountability of political and military leaderships. The Register has also stimulated many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers. Finally, the Register has set an example for regional initiatives, such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions mentioned earlier.

It has also been noted, however, that after spectacular growth in participation and reporting in its initial use, the number of countries reporting to the Register on a regular basis has stabilized in recent years. This slow-down in growth is partly due to a number of drop-outs — countries that reported to the Register in the past but no longer do so, or which have been inconsistent in their reporting. Furthermore, countries that had no transfer did not report to the Register.

In this context, I should like to repeat the appeal made on the first day of our session by France, on behalf of the European Union. Those countries that have no transfers to report in a given year are expected to turn in a so-called nil report. A nil report provides important information for other participants in the Register, since it is a confirmation that no transfers have taken place. If countries do not fill in a nil report, others will never know for sure whether or not transfers have taken place.

There is a continuing need for the United Nations Secretariat and actively interested States to encourage wider and more consistent participation. In this context, I should like to express my sincere appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretariat in compiling and publishing the Register, assisting Member States with the submission of their reporting and preparing expert meetings. I should also like to express my sincere appreciation to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for having last week organized an information meeting on reporting to the Register. These meetings hope to create greater awareness of the functioning of the Register.

As in previous years, one of the main purposes of this draft resolution is to support the concept of transparency in armaments and to encourage Member States to participate in the Register. I sincerely hope that this Committee will continue to give its widespread support to the draft resolution on transparency in armaments in general and to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in particular.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): As this is the first time I am addressing this Committee, allow me first to congratulate the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. He and the members of the Bureau can count on my delegation's support in their efforts toward a productive session.

Speaking in the thematic debate, I should like briefly to discuss the subject of conventional disarmament, regional security and the Conference on Disarmament. A veteran Polish diplomat, later a distinguished member of the International Court of Justice, the late Manfred Lachs, once noted:

> "At San Francisco we believed we were setting two objectives on the road to peace: decolonization and disarmament. We thought that decolonization would take at least 50 years, while disarmament we could achieve in a decade. In fact, it turned out to be exactly the other way around."

Frankly speaking, Judge Lachs was overly optimistic. More than half a century after the inception of the United Nations, there is still a heavy agenda of pending disarmament problems. It is illustrative of how far we have fallen behind the target date anticipated in San Francisco. As the debate in this Committee has clearly shown, this is the case with regard to many areas, with conventional weapons certainly among them.

For decades, the primary concern of the international community was how to avoid a nuclear conflict and ensure the use of nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes. We have seen momentous developments in the nuclear area. With important bilateral and multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements in place, the world has become a more secure place in which to live. However, the threat of a nuclear conflagration has receded only — and sadly — to be replaced by other challenges to stability and security. Often assuming the form of intra-State, ethnic or religious conflicts fought with conventional arms, these challenges are characterized by untold violence and unusual cruelty. As is often the case, the principal victims are non-combatant civilians: the young, the old and the infirm.

The classical notion of stability based upon equilibrium between two adversary groupings has undergone a fundamental change. International security has become multidimensional with the changing role of the military factor. This does not mean that arms control and disarmament have become irrelevant or have no valid role to play in preventing conflicts, reducing the risk of war, strengthening confidence and enhancing international security.

Clearly, the long agenda in the nuclear area is heavy with unfinished business, but this is not sufficient reason to neglect the question of conventional arms. It is these arms, used in innumerable regional conflicts over the last few decades, which account for infinitely more victims than have been claimed by theoretically more potent but less usable nuclear arms. As we read in the "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament" of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the level of accumulation of small arms alone continues to affect international security negatively and to have devastating consequences for socio-economic development and the humanitarian situation in the countries and regions concerned.

The international community can neither comprehend nor reconcile the failure to place conventional disarmament measures on the disarmament agenda and to address these in earnest. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament could play a critical role in negotiating global measures on specific conventional weapons and weapons systems. We need to work out a comprehensive approach in this regard — an approach that would, it is hoped, go beyond the scope of issues such as the illicit traffic in small arms or the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, however important these are.

International security is a concept that is becoming more comprehensive and multidimensional in character. The notion of security is increasingly associated with how successful we are in upholding common values — combating organized crime and terrorism, preventing abuses of human rights, famine, etc. However, I believe there is still a consensual view that progress in conventional disarmament is inextricably linked to the strengthening of international security, including in a regional context. Indeed, more often than not, security starts in the region and at home. Thus, one should first look to one's own backyard.

Despite the recent tragic history of the conflicts on the perimeter of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Europe can be considered a good example of how much might be achieved in the domain of regional security through conventional disarmament. The adoption of the Charter for European Security and the successful completion of negotiations on the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe have made our continent safer. Poland has actively participated in this process and will participate in the implementation of what has been achieved.

In the course of the general debate in this Committee the Ambassador of France, in his statement on behalf of the European Union, pointed out the responsibility of Europeans for developments on the continent. The need to elaborate a common European security and defence policy (CESDP) and the resolve of the European Union to create rapid deployment forces have specifically been referred to. Poland has fully associated itself with that statement. At the same time, we should like to express our conviction that the role of those European countries which have adequate capabilities and which wish to actively participate in this process under the full decision-making autonomy of the European Union should not be bypassed.

This is important for us, the more so in that the majority of European States have clearly expressed their willingness to cooperate closely with the European Union in this sphere. It should also be remembered that for some time now the Union has been involved in a political dialogue with its partners on the question of CESDP. Intensive preparations are already underway in the capitals of the aforementioned States for presenting national contributions to the rapid deployment forces of the European Union — the so-called European Headline Goal.

When it comes to the Conference on Disarmament, value judgements cannot be an acceptable yardstick in regard to either the substance of its business or its procedure and modus operandi. Yet, paradoxically, the evaluation of the work of the Conference — the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body — is one area where consensus among its members is more likely than in any other.

A sense of dissatisfaction or even frustration over the windows of opportunity lost as the result of the enduring controversy over a work programme is shared by all. We tend to decry the prolonged paralysis of this body, to deplore its tarnished prestige and to advocate the re-examination of its operating mode, procedures or agenda. Some consider that the Conference — a body dating back to cold war days and a bipolar world — needs to be more representative of the international community and more responsive to the challenges and realities at the threshold between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

It is claimed now and again that the Conference on Disarmament is in decline — some say death throes — that it has outlived its usefulness, that it is at the cross-roads and that something must therefore be done about it — either revitalize it or dissolve it. We do not take such a dim view of the Conference and its future. The crisis through which that body has been passing for some time now is not of its own making. Indeed, it is the reflection of broader geo-strategic relationships between States. It is the international climate at large and security concerns of States, not Conference procedures, that determine the conduct of negotiations.

As a negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament stands apart. Unlike global economic or environmental problems dealt with in various forums, arms control and disarmament is a domain that affects the most vital security interests of States. More often than not, these interests cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in random, open-ended frameworks. We accept that the problem is to negotiate meaningful and verifiable arms control agreements that involve "players" who count.

There is basically nothing wrong with the Conference. Its ability to get down to serious work at short notice is there, unimpaired. What is scarce is political will to take advantage of the available potential. The recent efforts to reach consensus on a work programme have demonstrated the critical importance of political will. Flexibility and imagination by the majority of the Conference members resulted in a near-consensus on the programme of work. While not totally happy with all aspects of the proposal discussed, they could live with it. To them, the proposal was a good basis on which the Conference could operate. Regrettably, full consensus proved elusive once again. The irritating deadlock could have been broken and purpose-oriented endeavours of the Conference could by now be under way.

Basically, I repeat, there is nothing wrong with the Conference on Disarmament, although, for instance, rule 27 of the rules of procedure could be amended in one important respect. In Poland's considered view, at its the annual sessions the Conference should not vigorously enforce cut-off dates for the work of subsidiary bodies. Once a subsidiary body is established and entrusted with a specific mandate, it ought to be able to continue until its mandated task is achieved. There should be no need for its existence or its mandate to be renewed every year. One concrete benefit would be the avoidance of the divisive and unbecoming wrangle over the work programme we are so familiar with and irritated by.

The Conference on Disarmament could and should be in better shape. We agree. However, we are not prepared to question its enduring relevance because "it is not delivering". Like some other Conference members, we think that substantial redeeming value is inherent even in ostensibly idle deliberations. In the domain of disarmament, which is so crucial for the national interests of States and for international security, knowing more about others — and through that to know more about ourselves — is an indispensable condition for confidence-building. The latter, in turn, is indispensable if we are to properly evaluate from the national perspective the price of compromise, which is a *conditio sine qua non* of each and every disarmament step. Indeed, it seems to us that the Conference, in addition to its other functions, is a very specific confidence-building forum, the true importance of which could be demonstrated only by the Conference's non-existence. Then we would have to invent it.

It is not true that the Conference has been lying entirely idle. We all know that. My delegation would like to believe that all those frequently invisible steps build a critical mass of political will, responsibility towards the future and a sense of urgency which will yield a long-awaited harvest. We hope the deliberations in this Committee will bring us all closer to that important goal.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of presenting to the First Committee, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), our annual draft resolution on "Assistance to States for curbing illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", in document A/C.1/55/L.11.

The preamble sets out the profound causes of the initiatives taken at subregional level and at the level of the United Nations with a view to better identifying the problems related to small arms. The breadth and persistence of the phenomena of insecurity and major banditry related to illicit traffic in small arms, their illegal international transfer and their accumulation in numerous countries constitute a threat to the populations of these States and to their national and regional security and are a factor contributing to the destabilization of States.

It has thus become necessary to advance our efforts towards greater cooperation in order to eliminate this scourge. The operative section of the text notes that actions have been undertaken by the West African subregion, ECOWAS, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in implementing this initiative. Among these actions, we could mention the flame of peace ceremony held in Niger and in Liberia, during which thousands of weapons turned in by ex-combatants were destroyed. A project to collect arms in order to finance development projects has been initiated in Guinea-Bissau.

The operative section of the draft resolution encourages the setting up of national commissions against the proliferation of small arms and recommends the involvement of organizations and associations of civil society in efforts to combat the proliferation of these weapons. Finally, the text expresses full support for the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in the year 2001.

My delegation would like to thank all those countries that kindly agreed to co-sponsor this draft resolution. Its substance remains an essential preoccupation for the development of our States. We welcome cooperation with the Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs and urge them to pursue their efforts in order to make more dynamic, and provide support for, the different initiatives of the West African subregion.

As in previous years, we should like this draft resolution to continue to enjoy the consensus support of the First Committee.

Mr. Abou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Addressing this Committee for the first time, Sir, my delegation wishes to congratulate you most sincerely on your election. We are very pleased to see the manner in which you are fulfilling this task. My delegation also wishes to congratulate Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General, for his introductory statement.

As a co-author of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.11, the delegation of Niger wishes to support the presentation made by Mali and to say specifically that we share the high expectations for this initiative. The importance of this draft resolution lies in the need for greater involvement by the international community in efforts carried out by Governments against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

My delegation feels that it is essential that States manifesting a real will to build peace and to ensure the security of their populations in order resolutely to tackle development problems see serious support for their efforts, so as to speed up the process already underway. As mentioned by Mr. Dhanapala in his introductory statement, my country illustrates a commitment on the part of its people to consolidate peace through concrete disarmament measures, through the flame of peace ceremony held in Agadez on 25 September 2000, during which over a thousand weapons were handed over by former rebels and burned — one element of the implementation of peace agreements. Another meaningful aspect of this ceremony was the decision taken by the former rebels to announce their own dissolution and their commitment to civil life in various sectors of the economy.

In this respect, my delegation feels that the consolidation of peace involves at least three urgent actions if it is to be real and lasting. The first is raising public awareness, especially in those areas most affected by recent conflicts. The second is recovery of weapons held by civilians who have had to defend themselves. It is important that those who agree to hand over weapons may be confident that a simultaneous or gradual recovery of weapons is taking place involving those who are still hesitant and who might be considered potential aggressors. The third action is the implementation of development measures to fight poverty and to rehabilitate the affected areas in a comprehensive manner, because scarcity of economic resources and infrastructure gives rise to conflict.

In order to carry out these measures, my Government has defined a framework for intervention, in particular through the programme for the development of pastoral zones prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which should soon be the subject of a round table by donors.

In addition, the national commission for collecting illicit weapons is carrying out its activities with determination. It has drawn up a pilot project to recover arms from Nguigmi, which has drawn the attention of the group of countries interested in practical disarmament measures, particularly France, Germany, Japan and Norway, whose financial contribution made possible the fact-finding mission carried out by the Department for Disarmament Affairs last August. This mission, which gathered a great deal of information during its visit to Niger and appreciated the commitment of the authorities and various stakeholders in the peace process, drew relevant conclusions in its final report.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the above-mentioned countries as well as to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for the substantial interest in this programme. It invites other countries to join this arms recovery initiative of Niger by firmly supporting the national commission, so that its success will allow other local ceremonies for the destruction of weapons to take place, as planned by the

Government. This approach is the best option and the ultimate goal in guaranteeing peace and stability, since, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his annual report for 1999, "Destroying yesterday's weapons prevents their being used in tomorrow's wars."

Mr. Palanimanickam (India): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", in document A/C.1/55/L.31, on agenda item 69, sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This draft resolution addresses an issue of importance to the international community and the developing world. The growth of science and technology offers immense possibilities for development, but at the same time there is a need to recognize that several of these advances could have military applications and are euphemistically described as "dual use" in character.

This year's draft resolution is similar to resolution 54/50 of last year, except for the deletion of paragraph 4, which is no longer relevant.

Access to scientific and technological advances for development purposes remains a priority issue for developing countries. In fact, such access is an impetus for economic growth and can have a positive impact on global trade. At the same time, several countries in the developing world have had to pay a price in terms of development because of the persistence of discriminatory control regimes. These regimes are in effect no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit exchanges of such technologies to themselves while denying access to others who may require them for peaceful development purposes. These regimes are the equivalent of non-economic barriers to normal trade and go against the generally accepted principles of global economic relations.

Policies devoted exclusively to export controls were initiated to address proliferation concerns at a time when there were no global agreements that comprehensively addressed this issue. Questions have arisen whether such exclusive arrangements with limited membership have been effective in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, especially as regards the scientific and technological applications connected with advanced weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character eliminating a complete class of weapons of mass destruction — offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory legal mechanism that would simultaneously address proliferation concerns emanating from unregulated transfers while at the same time promoting the economic development of States parties. The CWC placed an obligation on States parties to review their export policies as measures they take to prevent the spread of chemical materials and equipment for purposes contrary to the objectives of the Convention. However, the persistence of certain ad hoc control regimes, creating a dual category of States parties to the CWC, draws attention to the need for early implementation of all provisions of the Convention, to safeguard its long-term viability and effectiveness.

The ongoing negotiations for an effective protocol to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 provide the States parties with an opportunity to establish an effective system to regulate transfers of the agents, toxins, equipment and technologies relevant to the Convention while avoiding measures that hamper the economic development of States parties. The negotiations should also benefit from the lessons learned from the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention since its entry into force.

The lack of a genuinely non-discriminatory, universal agreement regarding nuclear weapons has also reduced the effectiveness of non-proliferation efforts in the nuclear field. Nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects cannot be divorced from the need for measures that promote nuclear disarmament and the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons. The absence of a disarmament benchmark renders nuclear non-proliferation difficult not only to implement but also to measure.

India has consistently maintained that proliferation concerns regarding materials and technologies related to advanced weapon systems and weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory agreements that are transparent and open to universal participation. The reflection of this principle in multilateral disarmament agreements would not only improve their effectiveness but also create an added impetus for their universality.

With a view to carrying forward the consideration by the international community of the issues at hand, India, along with the other sponsors, commends the draft resolution for adoption by this Committee. We hope it will receive the support of a large number of delegations.

Mrs. Pereira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and on behalf of the associated States Bolivia and Chile on agenda item 73 (g), "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

We are very pleased to note the progress achieved in the implementation of this essential instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has already been ratified or acceded to by approximately 140 States. Nevertheless, despite the rapid progress in increasing its membership, a great efforts is still needed to achieve the objective of giving the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) a universal character and extent.

We note with satisfaction that since August 1998, all the countries of MERCOSUR and the two associated States have signed and ratified the Convention. Ratification of the Convention by these six countries is not an isolated demonstration of our contribution to the multilateral mechanisms for disarmament. Even prior to the conclusion of the negotiations of OPCW in Geneva, Argentina, Brazil and Chile united to sign the Mendoza Declaration in 1991, a formal commitment completely to prohibit chemical and biological weapons. The subsequent accession of Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Ecuador to that international instrument confirmed the pioneering tradition of Latin America in the implementation of measures of a global nature.

In 1998, through the Declaration of Ushuaia, which I will refer to under another item of our agenda, MERCOSUR and the associated States created in the region a zone of peace free of weapons of mass destruction. More recently, in the Brasilia Communiqué, the 12 Presidents of the South American countries agreed to establish a zone of peace in South America.

The incorporation of the letter and spirit of OPCW into our legislation is consequently one additional piece which has been reiterated and strengthened by various initiatives complementary to the broader set of measures which consolidate the deep-rooted commitment of the countries of the Southern Cone to the elimination of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the group would like to praise the dynamic and effective leadership of the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador José Mauricio Bustani. We should like to express our satisfaction at the renewal of his mandate at the head of OPCW, which we believe constitutes international acknowledgement of his devotion and professionalism and of the credentials of the region in the field of chemical weapons.

This was underscored during the successful visit of the Director-General to the countries of the region last April. Similarly, the Chilean presidency of the fifth Conference of States Parties last May and the election of Uruguay to the Executive Council of the Organization show the vitality of the participation of the countries of the region in OPCW.

We support the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly of the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW. The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated States do our utmost to meet our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our Governments and industries have fully cooperated with the inspection activities carried out thus far by the OPCW in our countries.

These inspections took place in a climate of understanding, and we should like to stress the professional attitude of the inspectors. The region made an important contribution to improving the verification mechanisms of the OPCW by carrying out the first challenge inspection exercise in a private industrial plant in Brazil.

We feel that in addition to cooperation in the areas of science and technology, the mechanism of the Convention should be used to promote the legitimacy of international controls on sensitive chemical substances. Not to do so would contribute to the weakening of this model instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Convention and the OPCW are the appropriate instruments for eradicating chemical weapons from the face of the earth. The States of MERCOSUR and the associated States are prepared to support these instruments in order to ensure that the Convention and the OPCW can serve as pillars supporting a world characterized by peace, international security, development and the absence of all weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, MERCOSUR and Bolivia and Chile support draft resolution A/C.1/55/L/18, submitted by the delegations of Canada and Poland.

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico has the honour of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.9, entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme". It is sponsored by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, and South Africa.

We are also introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.10, entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", sponsored by Argentina, Chile, Egypt, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden and Thailand.

These two initiatives are part of the traditional support that Mexico provides to the activities of the United Nations in the area of disarmament.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme starting in 1998, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/78 E. Document A/55/128 and addendum 1 describes in detail the informative and educational materials of the Organization in the area of disarmament.

Training activities that have a favourable impact, mainly in the training of officials in developing countries, are also welcome, as are the means for cooperating with civil society, activities carried out in the regional sphere and activities carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Public Information.

Addendum 1 of document A/55/128 includes information on the contributions made to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme between January 1998 and December 1999. We should like to express our gratitude to the States that have generously contributed to the Trust Fund, and we hope that more States will join the list of contributors in the future.

The last preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.9 welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme. Its operative section emphasizes the need to disseminate information about arms limitation and disarmament by electronic means and through publications of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.9 recommends that the Programme continue the coordination, production and management of the Web site dedicated to disarmament, with a view to keeping an updated source of information that is readily accessible, and that the Web site be produced in as many United Nations official languages as possible.

It also recommends that the Programme continue to organize debates on subjects of interest in the area of arms limitation and disarmament in order to improve understanding and facilitate an exchange of views among the Member States and civil society.

Finally, it takes note of the proposal of the July 2000 proposal of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters for a study on disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.10, on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, is the outcome of a proposal adopted unanimously by the members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. The presidency of that body is held by the Mexican expert. The Mexican Government agreed to introduce this proposal in the First

Committee without making any amendments to its content.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts assembled on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, to prepare a study on disarmament and non-proliferation with the objectives of defining contemporary forms of disarmament and non-proliferation education and training and assessing the current situation of such education and training at various instructional levels. It would also recommend ways to promote education and training in disarmament and non-proliferation, examine ways to use new pedagogical methods, recommend ways for the organizations of the United Nations system to coordinate their efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation education and devise ways to introduce this type of education and training in post-conflict situations. This report would be presented for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

Mexico is aware of the budgetary restrictions facing the Organization. Consequently, the expenses for the work of the expert group, whose composition would be more restricted than the usual expert group, will be covered by existing budgetary resources.

The delegation of Mexico hopes that draft resolutions A/C.1/55/L.9 and A/C.1/55/L.10 will enjoy the support of the First Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, who quite ably led the work of the Disarmament Commission. Mr. Zarif will report on the work of the Commission's session and introduce the relevant draft resolution.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should first like to present to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Bureau my congratulations on your election as officers of this Committee.

The most compelling security question in the new era of international relations is to define and establish a global security scheme which preserves and ensures the national security of all States. Disarmament, in this context, plays a very prominent and ever-increasing role. In the new international environment of the post-cold-war era, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has played an important role in consolidating and ensuring the contribution of Member States of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission, as the universal disarmament body, in which all Member States participate, is an important mechanism within the United Nations system, expected to contribute to further defining the general structure of a new security posture at the regional as well as international levels.

In this respect, and taking into consideration the priorities of the international community as set forth in the recommendations and decisions adopted by major disarmament bodies, and particularly by General Assembly resolutions, the Commission has set forth a programme of work to respond to such a demand.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is definitely among our highest priorities on the disarmament and international security agendas. Numerous calls have been made through resolutions of the General Assembly and other relevant bodies to commence discussions and deliberations on advancing nuclear disarmament. In this spirit, the Commission extensively considered beginning deliberations on nuclear disarmament as a priority, and all members worked very hard to explore all possibilities to enable the Commission to begin these deliberations.

The Commission, in a spirit of cooperation, succeeded for the first time in its history in including the item "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" on its agenda. The Commission has previously been able to consider other issues under the umbrella of nuclear disarmament, but this time it agreed to consider nuclear disarmament more directly and in a broad context.

The Commission furthermore agreed to consider as the second item on its agenda the question of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. This is a subject of great importance in the disarmament and national security agenda.

I am happy to report that the deliberations of the Commission this year, at the first session on these two agenda items, were quite comprehensive, and the report of the Commission was adopted by consensus. With the Committee's permission, I should like to introduce the general outline of the report of the 2000 session of the Disarmament Commission.

The report of the Commission for its 2000 session, contained in document A/55/42, as in previous years consists of four chapters and an annex, containing the results of the deliberations on two agenda items during the 2000 substantive session. The first three chapters include an introduction, an organizational section and the list of documents. Chapter IV, "Conclusions and recommendations", covers two consensus reports of the Working Group on item 4, entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament", and item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", as well as the status of deliberations on both the issues under discussion. The annex sets out the report of Working Group I.

The Disarmament Commission organized its 2000 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, the guidelines established by the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990, and decision 52/492, adopted under the item on the rationalization of the work of the Disarmament Commission at the resumed session of the First Committee in 1998.

In accordance with the latter decision, and starting from the year 2000, the Disarmament Commission was in principle supposed to consider two substantive agenda items, one of them specifically dedicated to nuclear disarmament. However, the Commission can add a third item on an exceptional basis. In the course of last year's organizational session, the Commission agreed on a two-item approach, those two items being "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms".

The consideration of item 4 has clearly demonstrated that the decision to introduce the item "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" into the Commission's agenda was timely. In the course of two meetings devoted to the general discussion, delegations made comments on a variety of nuclear disarmament issues and related international security matters, expressed their concerns over emerging trends and presented concrete ideas and proposals.

Based on those deliberations, the Chairman of the Working Group was able to submit his working paper, which took into consideration written as well as oral submissions and comments by delegations on his first draft. The Chairman's paper is his sole responsibility and does not represent a negotiated position. However, it is duly noted that Chairman's paper is a good basis for further consensus-building. I wish to express my appreciation to the Chairman of Working Group I, as well as to the Member States, for achieving this goal.

With regard to item 5, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, deliberations — as candid and intellectually challenging as they were — did not lead to agreement on annexing the Chairperson's paper to the Commission's report. States demonstrated flexibility and were ready to work towards an agreement on this issue; however, in the end, differences could not be fully reconciled.

I hope that our inability to agree on annexing the Chairperson's paper will in no way hinder the beginning of the substantive discussion of the item at the forthcoming session. Neither should it render void the positive elements of last year's deliberations on the item. It is heartening to note that the Chairperson of the Working Group intends to continue her informal consultations with Member States during the inter-sessional period. I sincerely thank her for her good work and wish her success.

Finally, I should once again like to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and support. A special tribute should be paid to the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur of the Commission, as well as to the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, for their imaginative and creative approach to the tasks entrusted to them by the Commission.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Jin Yongjian and Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their valuable assistance. My thanks and appreciation also go to the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, as well as to his able colleagues serving as secretaries of other working groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express my sincere appreciation to all the other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in carrying out its tasks.

With these remarks, I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/55/42. Allow me to take this opportunity, on behalf of the sponsors — which are traditionally members of the expanded Bureau of the Commission — to introduce as well the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.26, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission".

This draft is the result of open-ended informal consultations among members of the Disarmament Commission. It has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Commission, with only certain appropriate changes in the text as circumstances warrant. In this respect, paragraphs 3 and 4 of last year's resolution were deleted from the text of the proposed draft, since the issue of further rationalization of the Commission's work was not addressed this year.

Paragraph 5 of the draft refers to the two new agenda items, namely "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms".

On the question of the duration of the session of the Commission, as delegations remember, in resolution 54/56 A the Commission decided to hold the Commission's sessions for a period not exceeding three weeks, according to a 1998 decision on rationalization of the work of the Commission. However, the year 2000 turned out to be extremely busy with disarmament-related events. In an effort to accommodate many conflicting meetings and conferences, and taking into consideration that both agenda items were in their initial year of deliberations, it was agreed — on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent for the future work of the Commission — to reduce the 2000 substantive session to two weeks. In the present draft, paragraph 6 reverts back to the normal practice of having three-week substantive sessions of the Commission.

Let me conclude by expressing my hope for the success of the Commission's deliberations during the forthcoming session in 2001. The previous session laid a solid foundation for a more focused and target-oriented consensus-building process. I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.26 will again enjoy consensus support, as have draft resolutions in previous years.

Mr. Noburu (Japan): I shall introduce the draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.39.

Each year since 1994, the Government of Japan has submitted a draft resolution under the title "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", and this draft resolution has always been adopted with wide support from Member States. This is partly to be attributed to the intensive pre-consultations Japan held every year with a wide range of Member States, including the nuclear-weapon States, in an attempt to reflect their diverse views in that resolution. It is worth mentioning that thanks to these consultations, the resolution was adopted in 1998 with the support of all the nuclear-weapon States. In the light of the successful conclusion of the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, Japan decided this year to submit a new draft resolution, drawing upon both our past resolutions and the Final Document of the Review Conference.

Japan has approached as many States as possible, here in New York as well as in their capitals, in order to explain and seek their support for that draft resolution. We strongly hope that our draft resolution will again this year be widely supported, so that it will provide a solid foundation for future progress in nuclear disarmament.

Knowing that the delegation of Algeria has also introduced a draft resolution which welcomes the outcome of the NPT Review Conference, we have included in our draft resolution some additional values which we consider vital for achieving progress in nuclear disarmament.

I should like to underline that we have no intention whatsoever of deviating from or contradicting the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference. We only wish to try to make the agreement in the Final Document more realistic.

While our consultations with various delegations have revealed that some of the points may not be agreeable to every Member State, we should like to retain them because the new language expresses the original position of Japan, which has a special background in this area. That is to say, a nuclear-weapon-free world should be achieved as early as possible, but the shortest way to that goal is to take a step-by-step approach, implementing concrete and practical measures one after another.

Let me briefly explain some of the salient points in the text. First of all, the title of the draft resolution is now "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", as opposed to the traditional title "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons". The operative paragraphs specify the steps to be taken along such a path, on the basis of an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate totally their nuclear arsenals and the practical steps agreed upon at the Review Conference.

Operative paragraph 3, which specifies a number of such steps, is taken from the Final Document of the NTP Review Conference. However, we have added a few new elements. First, subparagraph (a) sets the year 2003 as the target year for entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) because we believe it is time to think about such a target, taking into consideration the positive pledges made this year by some key States.

Secondly, subparagraph (b) of our draft resolution is more straightforward than the NPT document in calling for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material. It also sets the year 2005 as the target year for the conclusion of such negotiations. In this subparagraph, we also retain the reference made in last year's resolution to a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We believe this step should logically be given high priority in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In operative paragraph 4, we specify two new intermediate steps which the nuclear-weapon States must logically take in their efforts to realize the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. These are a continuation of the nuclear disarmament process beyond START III and deeper reductions in nuclear weapons by all the nuclear-weapon States, unilaterally or through their negotiations, in the process of working towards achieving their elimination.

Finally, operative paragraph 11 welcomes the consensus adoption at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference in September of a resolution that includes elements of a plan of action to promote and facilitate the conclusion and entry into force of safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

At the Millennium Summit, as well as during the subsequent general debate of the General Assembly, both Prime Minister Mori and Foreign Minister Kono of Japan announced Japan's intention to submit a United Nations draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. The draft resolution that I have just introduced is the product of intensive consultations with Member States. It is a quest to define, to the greatest extent possible at the end of the twentieth century, a path that we all must take to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan hopes that this draft resolution will be supported by each and every delegation.

I should also like to invite any Member State which is willing to do so to join us as a co-sponsor.

Mr. Luck (Australia): The Australian delegation welcomes the submission of Japan's draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Last year, Australia co-sponsored Japan's nuclear-disarmament resolution, and we are pleased to be able to do so again this year. We hope the draft resolution will be able to attract wide support, including from the nuclear-weapon States.

We particularly welcome those paragraphs in the draft resolution which give expression to the outcome of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The draft resolution reflects key elements of the NPT Review Conference outcome, most notably as they relate to article VI of the Treaty.

It is vital that the international community remain solid in its commitment to the undertakings made at the Review Conference and that we begin implementing those commitments at an early stage. Delegations will note, for example, that in operative paragraph 3 (a) the draft resolution calls for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by 2003. This may be seen by some as an ambitious deadline, but, like Japan, Australia has consistently called for the entry into force as soon as possible of this vital reinforcing instrument for the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Similarly, we welcome the emphasis in the draft resolution on the importance of an immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on

Disarmament on a treaty banning production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

We welcome the emphasis on the conclusion of a programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament, which includes the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament, and we welcome the emphasis on the early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and strengthening the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability.

We further welcome the inclusion of the steps identified by the NPT Review Conference to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States leading to nuclear disarmament, including as they relate to further unilateral disarmament steps, transparency, non-strategic nuclear weapons, concrete measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons, security policies and the engagement as soon as appropriate of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. Equally important, the draft resolution draws attention to the importance of ongoing efforts to dismantle nuclear weapons and the need to ensure that excess fissile material is handled in a safe and effective way.

We also endorse the draft resolution's emphasis on the importance of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Australia is a committed supporter of the IAEA strengthened safeguards system, developed to remedy the limitations exposed by Iraq's clandestine nuclear-weapons programme. Full effectiveness of the strengthened safeguards system will be achieved only when there is universal adherence to the additional protocols to IAEA safeguards agreements, which makes this a key non-proliferation goal.

As we noted in our statement in the general debate, Australia is pleased to have been the first country to ratify an additional protocol and urges all States that have yet to sign and ratify an additional protocol to do so as quickly as possible. I commend the draft resolution to delegations.

Mr. González Saiffe (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is pleased to present, on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela, draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.8, under agenda item 79. The draft resolution is entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)".

The States parties and signatories of the Treaty of Tlatelolco welcome the recognition given in the Final Document of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference last May to the importance of the establishment of nuclear-free zones and the important role they play in promoting peace and world and regional security, strengthening the global non-proliferation regime and contributing to the attainment of the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

At the regional level, it is important to note the agreement reached in resolution 388 of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted on 30 November 1999, to request the Secretary-General of that Agency to draft a proposal containing specific objectives for the convening of an international conference of the parties of the nuclear-free zones and to establish contacts with the authorities of other nuclear-free zones in order to communicate to them the interest in holding such a conference and to hear their views.

The priority accorded by Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to the consolidation of the regime prohibiting nuclear weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been demonstrated once again this year through the sponsoring of this draft resolution by all the States parties and signatories of the Treaty.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.8, in its eleventh preambular paragraph, notes with satisfaction the ratification by Nicaragua on 8 November 1999 of the amendment to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was adopted by the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in resolution 290, as well as the acceptance by Panama on 8 August 2000 of the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco adopted by the

General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in resolutions 267 and 268, and Ecuador's ratification on 30 August 2000 of the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco adopted by the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in resolution 268. Consequently, the amended Treaty of Tlatelolco is now fully in force in 16 countries.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution welcomes the concrete steps taken by some countries of the region during the past year for the consolidation of the regime of military denuclearization established in the Treaty and urges those countries of the region which have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification of the amendments to the Treaty approved by the Agency in resolutions 267, 268 and 290.

We hope that draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.8, as in previous years, will receive the broadest possible support of the First Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Russian Federation, together with the delegations of the Republic of Belarus and the Peoples' Republic of China, is submitting a draft resolution entitled "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems", as contained in document A/C.1/55/L.2, for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly.

The text of the draft resolution is identical to the resolution adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We are not proposing any revisions that would change the essence of last year's resolution. We feel that such an approach will allow us avoid a protracted and unnecessary debate.

The draft resolution is not confrontational in nature. It is based on the language of the Treaty itself and on the joint statements by the Presidents of Russia and the United States on this issue.

It is not targeted against any country and does not impinge upon anybody's interests. The objectives pursued by the sponsors of the draft resolution are to secure the continuity of the position, adopted by the international community in support of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, not to allow its revision or destruction, to prevent the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems for defence purposes which are banned by the Treaty and, by so doing, to ensure the preservation of the Treaty as it currently stands and the full implementation of the obligations contained therein.

Though only a limited number of States are parties to the ABM Treaty, it affects the fundamentals of the security of practically every State. Compliance with the Treaty cannot be considered a matter for Treaty parties alone. For the more than a quarter of a century of its existence, the ABM Treaty has proved its effectiveness and viability. Throughout this entire period, it has ensured the balance of forces and world stability, while playing a decisive role in the containment of the arms race.

The great significance of the ABM Treaty for nuclear disarmament is recognized by practically all States. It was the ABM Treaty which created the basic strategic prerequisite for the conclusion of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces, START I and START II Treaties. Nuclear disarmament, which had previously been an abstract idea, became one of the practical priority objectives of the international community. Both nuclear disarmament and the future of the ABM Treaty, in their profound logical interrelationship, are subjects of concern to all countries of the globe, without any exception.

The international community expressed its attitude towards the ABM Treaty by adopting a resolution a year ago in support of the Treaty at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. That resolution has played an obvious positive role in creating the necessary atmosphere around the ABM Treaty, the future of which was being threatened.

I wish to recall that at the recent Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, this Treaty was recognized as a cornerstone for maintaining global strategic stability and the basis for strategic offensive arms reductions. The destruction of the ABM Treaty would result in extremely negative consequences for the process of arms limitation and reduction, for non-proliferation regimes covering weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, for the entire system of international treaties and agreements in the sphere of arms control and, in general, for strategic stability and international security. The alteration of the ABM Treaty would be equivalent to its destruction, in that instead of prohibiting the deployment of national missile defence systems it would permit such deployment.

The Russian position on the ABM Treaty is known to everyone, and it remains unchanged. We are against its revision or its being undermined. We see no real basis for the revision of the obligations it contains. We consider it necessary to continue efforts aimed at promoting support for the ABM Treaty.

In spite of the decision taken by United States President Bill Clinton not to commit himself to the deployment of a national missile defence system, the situation regarding the ABM Treaty has not changed in principle. The work on preparation of the United States missile defence system is still under way. We are in favour of continuing the dialogue with the United States. However, this does not imply our consent in any way to the adaptation of the ABM Treaty to accommodate the United States national defence system. I wish to stress that Russia has not conducted, is not conducting and is not willing to conduct any negotiations with the United States on the amendment of the ABM Treaty with a view to its adaptation to accommodate the American missile defence system. Such an adaptation is not possible at all, since any change in the core provisions of the ABM Treaty — that is, the prohibition of the deployment of the national missile defence system and of the creation of the basis for such a system — would void the Treaty of its purpose. In the dialogue with the United States of America on START and ABM issues, we have repeatedly pointed out the fatal consequences that would result from the destruction of the ABM Treaty for disarmament and strategic stability.

Russia is ready to continue working jointly with the United States as well as with other interested States to ensure international security, including speedy movement towards agreement on the further reduction of nuclear arsenals, the enhancement of the nuclear and missile non-proliferation regimes and the strengthening of strategic stability by political means. We recently ratified START II, the 1997 New York package of START and ABM-related agreements and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are awaiting reciprocal measures from the United States.

We favour the immediate commencement of START III negotiations. During the Okinawa Summit, the Russian President, Mr. Putin, gave United States President Clinton detailed proposals on the main items of START III negotiations. We feel that the conclusion of a START III treaty is possible only if the integrity of the ABM Treaty is preserved. We believe that the continuing threat of the destruction of the ABM Treaty calls for additional efforts in its defence on the part of the international community, in order to safeguard global stability and international security.

These are the goals of the draft resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty, submitted by Russia jointly with Belarus and the People's Republic of China. The adoption of the draft resolution would be a new signal by the international community in favour of ensuring the viability of the Treaty. We are hopeful that our draft resolution will meet with broad support.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his introduction of the draft resolution "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems". I should like to make a few comments on matters related to this issue.

First, at present, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is at risk of being weakened or even repealed. It is an urgent task for the international community to preserve and comply with the ABM Treaty. The ABM Treaty, which was concluded in 1972, constitutes the cornerstone of the global strategic balance and international security. It is also the basis for the further reduction of strategic offensive weapons. However, one country, in seeking unilateral absolute security and military superiority, is pushing hard for its national missile defence programme and has repeatedly called for a revision of the ABM Treaty. It has even threatened to withdraw from the Treaty if no agreement is reached on its revision.

Weakening or overturning the ABM Treaty, coupled with the development and deployment of the national missile defence system, will inevitably lead to serious consequences, upsetting the global strategic balance and stability, compromising mutual trust among States, impeding multilateral and bilateral arms control and disarmament processes and jeopardizing international non-proliferation efforts. It will also lead to the weaponization of outer space and trigger a new round of the arms race.

Last year, this Committee, as well as the General Assembly, adopted by an overwhelming majority the resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty, sponsored by the Russian Federation, Belarus and China. Its adoption is clear testimony to the political will of the international community to oppose the deployment of national missile defence systems and the revision of the ABM Treaty. This showed that the overwhelming majority of the countries in the world want to maintain the global strategic balance and stability. They do not want to see an erosion of the positive results achieved since the end of the cold war by the international community in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, nor do they wish to see national missile defence systems become a negative factor, jeopardizing trust and impeding cooperation.

Since the beginning of this year, there have been some important developments with regard to the missile defence issue. Various countries have become increasingly aware of the harmful effects of national defence system development. More and more countries have expressed their anxiety and concern in this regard. With the relaxation of tension in certain regions, the excuse that such a system is being developed to counter the missile threat of the so-called "States of concern" is even more untenable.

In the meantime, we have also noted that there are still different views on the ABM Treaty and national missile defence systems. A certain country has spread all kinds of seemingly plausible but actually false arguments in an attempt to create confusion on this issue. The Chinese delegation believes that it is necessary to use this opportunity to take a close look at these arguments so as to clarify the issue.

Some argue that the ABM Treaty and national missile defence systems are issues that mainly concern the big Powers such as the United States and Russia and have little to do with other countries. It is also believed that the implementation and revision of the ABM Treaty should be determined by the States parties to the Treaty and that this Committee should not become involved in this issue. It is the view of my delegation that security has always been mutual. In today's world, all countries find increasing common security interests and challenges.

As a cornerstone of the global strategic balance, the ABM's significance and implications far exceed the bilateral relations between the United States and Russia and, rather, concern the security interests of all countries. Should the national missile defence system be deployed, the results achieved over many years in bilateral and multilateral disarmament and arms control will go down the drain. Furthermore, once the global strategic balance is upset, the tendency towards unilateralism in international affairs can only increase rather than decrease. Global as well as regional security will face new uncertainties. When this occurs, all countries — big or small, strong or weak, States parties or States non-parties to the ABM Treaty — will feel the impact.

It is therefore in the common interest of the entire international community to safeguard the integrity and validity of the ABM Treaty and to urge the relevant country to abandon its national missile defence plan. Each and every country has an obligation and duty to do its part to further this goal. Likewise, as an important forum on international security and disarmament, this Committee ought to pay great attention to the consideration of this important issue, so as to halt the above-mentioned negative development and avoid its grave consequences.

It is asserted by some that, because the ABM Treaty was concluded more than 20 years ago and has undergone amendments in the past, its further revision in the light of the changing situation is justified. I would like to point out that the arms control treaties concluded in the past should indeed adapt themselves to the changing international situation. The question is, is the ABM Treaty still suitable for the current international situation? My answer is yes.

The ABM Treaty is still the cornerstone of global strategic stability; this is a shared understanding among almost all countries. Secondly, existing arms control and disarmament treaties can of course be amended. However, amendments should be aimed at promoting the Treaty's purposes and objectives and enhancing international peace and security, not the contrary. If amendments have the effect of compromising a Treaty's purposes and objectives and jeopardizing international peace and security, such amendments, naturally, should be opposed and rejected.

The present proposal for the revision of the ABM Treaty obviously falls into the latter category. The argument that past revisions of the ABM Treaty justify new ones is totally untenable. The key is the purpose and effect of amendments. Amending the ABM Treaty to pave the way for national missile defence system deployment is in essence an attempt to repeal the Treaty on the pretext of proposing amendments.

Some hold the view that since the country in question decided not long ago that it could not be committed to deployment of the national missile defence system for the time being, it is not necessary for the international community to concern itself with this issue any longer. It goes without saying that the above decision is a wise one. It shows that the concerns and anxiety of the international community have prompted that country to reflect upon its missile defence plan. However, it must be realized that this does not mean that such a plan has been abandoned. In fact, the research and development in this field has been stepped up. Tests are continuing rather than coming to an end. We must be fully aware of this fact. In view of the above, the international community must, as always, follow these developments closely and continue to urge States parties to the ABM Treaty to comply strictly with the Treaty.

Some argue that what the country is developing is just a limited national missile defence system, so there is nothing to worry about. It must be pointed out that the ABM Treaty prohibits all such systems. Any such system, be it limited or large-scale, is therefore a violation of the Treaty. As a matter of fact, the national missile defence system being developed by the country concerned cannot be a limited one. If a limited system is put in place, it will inevitably be expanded, eventually evolving into a limitless one. Once Pandora's box is opened, there will be endless consequences.

In recent years, the missile issue has become more and more salient. The Chinese delegation believes that the missile issue is a complicated one. A unilateral approach or measures detrimental to global strategic stability cannot possibly solve this problem effectively. To solve this problem fundamentally, all countries should be committed to promoting the establishment of a just and rational new international political order — rejecting practices based on power politics and the abuse of armed force — and to further strengthening regional and international security. Furthermore, the missile issue in all its aspects should be dealt with in a comprehensive and objective manner by establishing a universal and non-discriminatory global regime through broad international dialogue and cooperation.

At this session of the General Assembly, the Russian Federation, Belarus and China are again sponsoring a draft resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty. This draft resolution is entirely constructive in nature and not directed against any country. Our desire is not to seek confrontation but to maintain global strategic balance and stability and promote nuclear disarmament.

We hope that more countries will support the draft resolution this year. We also hope that the country concerned will heed the call of the international community and make the right decision, in the fundamental interest of all countries and peoples of the world, by abandoning its national missile defence system plan, which harms all while benefiting no one.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Our understanding of the movement towards a non-nuclear world, which is our general goal, should be confirmed by real steps in this direction. We are firmly convinced that the key factor for security is the maintenance of strategic parity and balance throughout the world. We regard compliance with the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty as the logical basis for the maintenance of lasting international stability, the destruction of which could lead to quite a dangerous weakening of the entire structure of international agreements.

In this connection, we once again at this session of the General Assembly, together with the delegations of the Russian Federation and China, wish to be sponsors of the draft resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty. We are convinced that the ABM Treaty, following its ratification and entry into force, will allow us to create the conditions to maintain strategic stability, end the senseless and dangerous nuclear arms race and provide for sharp reductions.

It is difficult to contest the fact that this Treaty, signed and ratified by two of the major nuclear Powers, could fundamentally determine the entire system in the process of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this connection, its importance for the entire system of international security cannot be overestimated.

The Republic of Belarus, in 1997, together with the United States, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, signed a number of very important additional agreements which helped strengthen this important international agreement. We are in favour of the strict and mandatory fulfilment of the ABM Treaty. We should now allow it to be undermined or its provisions to be subject to any revisions.

We have initiated a procedure for the ratification of these agreements. All these steps testify to the consistency of our policy in strengthening the complex hierarchical structure of international security.

The obligation not to deploy an anti-ballistic missile defence or create a basis for such a defence is stipulated in article I of the ABM Treaty. This needs to be considered not only in the context of its fulfilment by countries parties to the Treaty but also in its broader application, especially as regards the dangerous proliferation of missiles and missile technology.

Regarding the announcement made by the current United States Administration on deferring the date for the final adoption of a decision on the deployment of a national missile defence system, we feel sure that that step was influenced not only by the results of recent tests but by the full support of Member States of the United Nations for the adoption of the relevant draft resolution at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

At the same time, a merely temporary deferral does not safeguard us from the threat to the entire structure of international security. In this respect, we once again express the hope that the wisdom frequently demonstrated by the international community in adopting important decisions will once again triumph.

Mrs. Mendis (Sri Lanka): My delegation will focus today on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in this thematic discussion.

Illicit arms trade is now recognized as posing one of the most serious threats to global peace and stability. Almost all delegations have voiced concern over the present state of affairs concerning this issue. We commend the action taken by some Member States and certain regional organizations to address this question. However, the lack of more effective and more comprehensive national and international measures against the easy availability of illicit arms provides an impetus to terrorist organizations to continue on a path of violence.

Since illicit arms traffickers frequently operate across borders, national laws often prove to be inadequate. The Department of Public Information documentary we saw last Monday and the recent act of terrorism perpetrated against a United States Navy ship bring forth the reality of the constant danger of illicit arms and explosives.

Clearly, the magnitude of this problem and the transnational criminal dimension it assumes call for international cooperation and resolute action at national, regional and international levels to effectively overcome this threat. In this context, sharing information on the sources of supply, clients, types of weapons involved, methods used to finance and traffic in small arms in violation of national laws and the consequences of such activities is essential.

The Secretary General's consultations pursuant to resolution 54/54 R have provided a substantial amount of very useful information on the magnitude of this problem, as well as on counter-measures. We thank the delegation of South Africa for taking this initiative. Material in document A/55/323 will constitute helpful input to substantive preparations for the forthcoming international Conference on this subject. The content of the report encompasses a broad range of convergent views on the issue, from governmental, intergovernmental and civil society sources. We hope that the Chair of the Preparatory Committee will use this material in further elaborating the elements of the draft action programme for the forthcoming Conference. Particularly relevant in this regard would be the synthesis contained in paragraphs 77 onwards.

We hope that the Department for Disarmament Affairs will continue and intensify its work on the illicit arms trade, with particular focus on intergovernmental discussions on this issue. The Organization of American States and the Inter-American Convention against illicit arms, and similar instruments in Africa, could be useful for developing appropriate models in other regions. The Department for Disarmament Affairs can study the feasibility of this. The current negotiations under the auspices of the Crime Prevention Commission in Vienna on the protocol against illicit firearms and explosives should be supported and supplemented.

We expect the international Conference to provide an effective global cooperative framework to prevent, counter and eliminate illicit arms smuggling.

We urge that the Conference and the preparatory process keep this objective in focus. A more complex and possibly contentious discussion on a control regime for self-defence requirements will be unnecessary and should be avoided.

Government procurement procedures, insofar as they relate to the aspects and transparency measures relevant to the illicit arms trade, will naturally figure in the discussions. This is only to ensure that legitimate State defence procurement is not confused with illicit trade or that illicit trade is misconstrued or labelled as arms activity for any legitimate purpose.

We are encouraged by the actions of Member States to adopt national measures against trafficking by terrorist groups and measures to destroy surplus, confiscated or collected arms and light weapons. We also welcome the reappraisal by certain States of laws governing the possession of firearms and the attempt to introduce legislation criminalizing the actions of traffickers. Capacity-building to enable States effectively to implement national and international measures is equally important. Similarly, at the regional level, bilateral exchanges of information, joint border and sea lane control measures, customs cooperation and common export control standards are also important.

The United Nations should play a significant role in developing an international cooperative regime against illicit arms and in supporting practical measures to operationalize that regime. Document A/55/323 identifies several areas for such action by the United Nations. We hope the Department for Disarmament Affairs will consider practical action on them as appropriate.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): If war originates in the minds of men, most arms races, especially in the conventional field, are the outcome of problems, disputes and political competition in various regions and subregions of the world.

Despite the promise of a peace dividend after the end of the cold war, we have new reason for concern about the escalation of arms races in various parts of the world involving conventional weapons. This is due to several reasons.

One the one hand, arms expenditures are rising once again and of the annual $1 trillion military expenditures, over 80 per cent is spent on conventional weapons. These expenditures are rising sharply in certain parts of the world, propelled by the political ambitions of some and the political compulsions of others.

The draft resolution in document A/C.1/55/L.35 addresses the issue of Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. I have the honour to introduce this draft resolution on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Belarus, Fiji, Germany, Mexico, Nepal, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and my own delegation.

The draft resolution recognizes the crucial role of conventional arms control in promoting regional and international peace and security and the fact that conventional arms control needs to be pursued primarily in the regional and subregional contexts.

It also recognizes the need for the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments and military forces and notes the initiatives taken in this context in Latin America, South Asia and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is a cornerstone of European security.

The draft resolution also reaffirms the basic principle that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security and that an important objective of conventional arms control in regions of tension should be to prevent the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression.

In the operative part of the draft resolution we would decide once again to give urgent consideration to the issues involved in conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels and request the Conference on Disarmament, as a first step, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for such regional agreements.

It is a matter of some disappointment to the sponsors that the Conference on Disarmament has not established such a mechanism, which was called for in previous resolutions of the General Assembly. We express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able, as part of its work programme next year, to undertake the exercise recommended by this draft resolution and to submit a report to the next session of the General Assembly.

We trust that this draft resolution, which reflects wide consensus among the international community, will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Mohammad (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the delegations of the Russian Federation, China and Belarus for their introduction of a draft resolution entitled "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems" again this year.

It is regrettable that the resolution adopted last year did not deter the United States of America from developing its national missile defence system, which undermines the aims and purposes of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The ABM Treaty is a cornerstone of the maintenance of strategic security and stability in our world today.

The ABM Treaty, since its signature in 1972, has helped to control and limit the deployment of such systems in the former Soviet Union and the United States of America. That Treaty played a crucial role in nuclear-arms control and helped to push nuclear disarmament forward. However, this Treaty is facing a serious challenge because of attempts by the United States to weaken it, contrary to the desire of the other parties to the Treaty, including the Russian Federation, and contrary to the will of the majority of the States of the international community, which are attempting to strengthen disarmament measures rather weaken them.

The aim of the United States of America in weakening the ABM Treaty is crystal-clear for everyone to see: to strengthen its strategic supremacy at the expense of other parties' security by developing a defensive missile system that does not exclude outer space from its sphere of application.

Even more seriously, the United States relies heavily on nuclear deterrence and it has resorted to force in international relations. It is using force and unilateral measures against Iraq, in a manner that runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations, by imposing no-flight zones, for instance. This is but one example among many where we see the United States of America practising the policy of force, or gunboat diplomacy, and flouting the rule of law.

The United States of America continues its continuation its cooperation with the Zionist entity to develop common and joint programmes for missile defence systems. The rocket successfully tested by Israel a few days ago is one of the fruits of such armaments cooperation, which leaves the door open for a further stage of armaments cooperation in which both shirk their responsibilities in disarmament, thereby destabilizing the international and regional systems.

It also diverts more financial and human resources to an arms build-up instead of earmarking those resources for economic and social development, with a view to establishing a culture of peace. This comes at a time when the world is in dire need of joint efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations and when we are trying to settle conflicts peacefully, shunning the policies of the use of force, which policies have led to nothing but destruction throughout the world.

On the basis of the foregoing, we fully support draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.2 and call upon all other States to support it as well.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.18

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
18th meeting
Thursday, 19 October 2000, 10 am
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): It is a pleasure for my delegation to introduce five draft resolutions on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement. These draft resolutions will be considered under agenda items 73 and 74.

First, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.20, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol". The draft resolution recalls the long-standing determination of the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons. It welcomes initiatives taken by some States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to withdraw their reservations. It also renews the General Assembly's previous call to observe strictly the principles, objectives and provisions of that treaty, and it calls upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to withdraw them. We trust that this draft resolution will again be adopted with the widest possible support.

The draft resolution entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control" is contained in document A/C.1/55/L.21. The fundamental objective of this draft resolution is to ensure compliance with relevant environmental norms when negotiating and implementing treaties and agreements relevant to disarmament. The international community has long been aware of the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled radioactive sources and the risks associated with military activities involving nuclear materials. The dismantling of certain categories of weapons requires techniques and methods that would sustain and augment the prevailing environmental standards. While the draft resolution does not make any reference to specific disarmament agreements, it nonetheless calls upon States to take fully into account the relevant environmental norms while negotiating arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. It also calls for the application of the advances made in science and technology to enhance security and facilitate disarmament without adverse impact on the environment or to its effective contribution to attaining sustainable development. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.22, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", underlines the importance of reallocating valuable resources released as the result of disarmament for development purposes, thereby reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries. That relationship has gained momentum and indeed become relevant against the backdrop of the diversion of a large proportion of financial, material and technological resources to armaments, which has

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This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

placed a heavy burden on the economies of many States, especially developing countries.

The stark contrast between expenditures for armaments and the paucity of aid for socio-economic progress is also self-evident. The draft resolution acknowledges the actions taken in the context of the Final Document adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and calls upon the high-level Steering Committee on Disarmament and Development to strengthen and enhance its programme of activities, in accordance with the mandate adopted at the Conference. It also calls on the international community to devote part of the resources made available through the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to take action for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference. The sponsors trust that this draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

As delegations are aware, at its fifty-fourth session the General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". Despite the fact that at its 1999 session the Disarmament Commission could not reach consensus on the objectives and agenda for a fourth special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the international community continue to believe that the convening of an SSOD IV would offer an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

Despite the current disagreement over its objectives and agenda, we continue to believe that a special session could still be held provided there is a strong political commitment by all Member States to use such a session to review the state of affairs in the entire field of disarmament and arms control in the post-cold-war era. However, we remain concerned over the lack of progress in this regard despite renewed attempts to establish another mechanism through which consensus on the objectives, agenda and timing of such a special session could be reached. As was the case with the resolution adopted without a vote at the fifty-fourth session, draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.23 calls for further steps that would lead to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda. It is for this reason that the sponsors of the draft resolution continue to believe that agreement to convene the special session could be facilitated through continued consultations by the Secretary-General.

Because the only substantive change from the resolution adopted at the fifty-fourth session is the inclusion of a new preambular paragraph that welcomes the Secretary-General's report on his consultations with Member States, the sponsors believe that the draft resolution could again be adopted without a vote.

Finally, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.24, entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament". This draft resolution underlines the importance of all regional centres as mechanisms to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution supports the activities of the three regional centres in Nepal, Peru and Togo, and emphasizes the valuable contribution of these centres towards changing basic attitudes to peace and security. The draft resolution also requests Member States in each of these regions and those in a position to do so, as well as international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to the three regional centres so as to enable them to fulfil their role and to enhance their programmes and activities. It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.25, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", under agenda item 72, on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Kuwait, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Egypt.

Year after year the delegation of Egypt prepares a draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, alternating with Sri Lanka, which has a great record of contributions on this subject in the Conference on Disarmament. Recognizing the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, the draft resolution stresses that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency and better information on the part of the international community. On that basis the draft resolution emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective provisions for verification to prevent an arms race in outer space, and calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The draft resolution, which we submit annually, emphasizes the need to take more measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space through the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament in the year 2001. We believe that that committee is the true place for dealing with this subject, as negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space remain its priority task.

The draft resolution last year was adopted as resolution 54/53 by a big majority — 162 to none. With this indication of our good intentions and willingness to reach a resolution to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in Geneva, we hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation has the honour to introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 74 (c), entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, document A/C.1/55/L.33, on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Nepal.

The General Assembly, while recalling its resolutions 42/39 D of 30 November 1987 and 44/117 F of 15 December 1989, would commend the useful activities carried out by the Regional Centre in fulfilling its mandate. Similarly, the Assembly would express its appreciation to the Regional Centre for organizing the annual disarmament meeting in Kathmandu and other related meetings in Akita and Jakarta. In one of its operative paragraphs the Assembly would reaffirm its strong support for the further strengthening of the Regional Centre and would also underscore the implementation of the Kathmandu process as a powerful vehicle for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue.

While expressing appreciation for continuing political support and financial contributions to the Regional Centre, the General Assembly would reiterate its appeal to Member States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to it. Furthermore, in operative paragraph 6 — which is an additional paragraph this year in view of the present reality — the Assembly would appreciate the generous offer of His Majesty's Government of Nepal to bear the operational cost of the centre for it to function from Kathmandu.

In accordance with these facts, the General Assembly in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution would request the Secretary-General to expedite his ongoing consultations with other concerned Member States and interested organizations and urge him to conclude them by 31 July 2001 in order to assess the possibility of enabling the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu as soon as possible. It is the sincere wish of my delegation that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus as has been the case in previous years.

While I have the floor may I make a correction to the draft resolution. On page 2, in operative paragraph 4, the second line should read "as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations" instead of "government and non-government organizations". These corrections should be reflected in the draft resolution.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", document A/C.1/55/L.48, dated 13 October 2000. We are pleased to announce that the draft resolution is sponsored by the following delegations, namely, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own delegation, Malaysia. My delegation expresses its gratitude to all the sponsors.

The draft resolution is an updated version of the resolution adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Fourteen of its preambular paragraphs and the four operative paragraphs are virtually identical with resolution 54/54 Q of 1 December 1999. However, a new element has been introduced as the sixth preambular paragraph, which reads:

> "*Welcoming* the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament".

For the sake of brevity I will focus only on the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. In operative paragraph 1 the Assembly

> "*Underlines once again* the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

Operative paragraph 2

> "*Calls once again upon* all States immediately to fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations in 2001 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination".

Operative paragraph 3

> "*Requests* all States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken on the implementation of the present resolution and nuclear disarmament, and requests the Secretary-General to apprise the General Assembly of that information at its [fifty-sixth] session".

In operative paragraph 4 the Assembly decides to include this issue in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session.

It is clear from the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue in good faith but also to bring to an early conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. That is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States parties under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and with their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of those weapons, as well as with the recently announced unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The sponsors of the draft resolution consider the unanimous opinion of the world court on the existence of this obligation to be a clear basis for follow-up actions by Members of the Organization in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

In introducing the draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors, I should like to stress a number of important points. First, in calling upon all States to commence multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention, the draft resolution does not envisage the commencement of immediate negotiations on the convention itself but rather on negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the conclusion of such a convention. It thereby allows for the very same kinds of disarmament measures that the nuclear-weapon States themselves have unequivocally undertaken to accomplish. Therefore, the approach called for in the draft resolution is both realistic and credible and compatible with the incremental approaches suggested by others.

Secondly, we are fully cognizant of the fact that negotiations on nuclear disarmament need to move forward in an incremental or progressive fashion. We commend the approaches taken by some countries towards that end outside the Conference on Disarmament, either through bilateral agreements or arrangements, or through unilateral decisions. However, we cannot but express disappointment at the painstakingly slow progress in these endeavours. START II is yet to be ratified, almost eight years after it was signed, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to come into force because a number of States have yet to sign and ratify it. While my delegation recognizes the importance and continued relevance of bilateral negotiations and unilateral decisions, they should not detract from the importance of multilateral negotiations. These two tracks complement and reinforce each other.

Thirdly, the draft resolution deliberately focuses on the unanimous opinion of the judges of the International Court of Justice on the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. It does so in order to avoid confusion between the Court's two main conclusions, namely, the threat and use of nuclear weapons, and the obligation to negotiate on nuclear disarmament. They obviously require different responses. The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligations of States, as that was a conclusion arrived at unanimously by the International Court of Justice. Its implementation is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a mandate to promote disarmament negotiations. The sponsors of the draft resolution recognize the value of the Court's decision as a whole. The draft resolution does not pretend that operative paragraph 1 concerns the only conclusion of the Court that could influence disarmament policy, or that there are no other actions that could be taken in light of the Court's opinion. In fact, operative paragraph 3, in which all States are requested to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken to fulfil their duties as underlined by the conclusions of the Court, encompasses the Court's decision as a whole.

Fourthly, the draft resolution calls upon all States to fulfil the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament. It does not relieve non-nuclear-weapon States of any disarmament responsibility or in any way single out nuclear-weapon States as the sole bearers of responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

Fifthly, the draft resolution does not remove the obligation under article VI of the NPT in relation to general and complete disarmament. The Court, in arriving at its conclusion, relied on international law, of which article VI of the NPT is a part, as well as other disarmament instruments and customary international law. The Court's conclusion that there is an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament made no linkage at all between such an obligation and general and complete disarmament, nor does the NPT make a direct link to that effect. It merely states that there is an obligation to do both.

Finally, on the draft resolution's silence on the Court's conclusion that there was not in international law a prohibition against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, the Court had in fact rejected that argument by stating that there would not be legal uses of nuclear weapons, and it emphasized that it could reach no definitive position under extreme circumstances. Further, it stressed that States must never make civilians the object of attack and consequently must never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets — and nuclear weapons are obviously incapable of so doing.

The Court's unanimous opinion that States have the obligation not only to conduct but also to successfully conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament clearly reiterates the obligation of the States parties to the NPT. The unanimous decision of the International Court of Justice, representing the full weight of the legal opinion of all members of the world court, is an important contribution to the development of international law which should not be summarily dismissed. The fact that the nuclear-weapon States have ignored this unanimous opinion and failed to pursue multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament has had a negative impact on the efforts of the international community towards that end.

The sponsors of the draft resolution regard the 8 July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* as an important and historic decision in the field of nuclear disarmament. It should be given due recognition and followed up. In submitting this draft resolution for the consideration of Member States, the sponsors are confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of Members of the Organization. We are confident that States supporting multilateral negotiations eventually leading to the global elimination of nuclear weapons — as we are all committed to accomplish — will have no reason to oppose the draft resolution that seeks to do exactly that in the long term. Once again, in introducing the draft resolution, my delegation expresses its appreciation to the sponsors as well as to delegations that will vote in its favour.

Mr. Sood (India): My delegation has sought the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", document A/C.1/55/L.32, under agenda item 73 (m), and sponsored by Bhutan, Costa Rica, Fiji, Kenya, Mauritius, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own delegation, India.

The delegation of India has highlighted in the First Committee the fact that with the end of the cold war a decade ago there is absolutely no justification for maintaining thousands of nuclear weapons in a state of hair-trigger alert, creating unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. This could have catastrophic consequences for all humankind. Therefore, India took the initiative to introduce the resolution on reducing nuclear danger two years ago and is gratified that it has received widespread support in the General Assembly.

The draft resolution puts forward a modest and practical proposal calling for a review of nuclear doctrines and, in this context, for immediate and urgent steps to reduce the risk of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons. Many nuclear-weapon States and their allies have opposed the resolution on grounds that a number of technical aspects were involved. While acknowledging the technical complexities, we believe that they can be overcome through the necessary political commitment.

It is accepted that the elimination of nuclear weapons under a non-discriminatory and multilaterally verifiable treaty requires complex negotiations. However, that is no justification for these weapons to be maintained in a state of high alert, creating the risks that I have referred to. It is imperative that even as we work towards developing the requisite political will, in the interim the international community accepts the need for urgent practical steps that will diminish nuclear dangers. The danger is a clear and present danger. It is a fact that there have been several instances of accidental near launches, often triggered by incomplete or inaccurate assessments of available information. These events demonstrate the error-prone character of maintaining large arsenals in a state of high alert.

A number of programmes and measures to achieve global nuclear disarmament have been put forward by States, eminent individuals and non-governmental organizations, and all of them also attribute a high priority to steps that reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons identified the first step as "taking nuclear forces off alert". A special statement by the Pugwash Conferences on the impasse in nuclear disarmament made a similar call. Non-governmental organizations such as Friends of the Earth, Union of Concerned Scientists, Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, the Stimson Centre and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), have also called for removing the hair-trigger posture of nuclear forces. The Tokyo Forum report of 1999 recognized the importance of moving in the direction of reducing the alert status of nuclear forces.

Most important, in March 2000, a few months ago, the Secretary-General, in his report to the Millennium Assembly, proposed the convening of a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in order to help focus attention on the risks posed by the hair-trigger alert of thousands of deployed nuclear weapons. The Declaration adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit on 8 September also resolved to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. Encouraged by this endorsement at the highest level, we therefore propose to reintroduce the resolution this year. In response to last year's resolution, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters prepared an interim report which was submitted to the Secretary-General, document A/55/324, which mentions the need for the Board to continue its discussions on the subject. Accordingly, the draft resolution this year requests the Secretary-General to continue to seek inputs from the Advisory Board on information with regard to specific measures that would significantly reduce the risk of nuclear war, including the proposal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration for convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

In order to make the resolution as widely acceptable as possible, we have attempted to keep it simple, topical, contemporary and free from references to contentious issues. We believe that the draft resolution, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", advocates a desirable objective, and we hope that it will receive the widest possible support in the Committee.

Ms. Pereira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of Bolivia and Chile in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The Political Declaration signed by the Presidents of the six countries at the Ushuaia Summit in Argentina on 24 July 1998 declares the region to be a zone of peace free from weapons of mass destruction, committing our States to take all necessary measures to ensure that MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile become a zone free from anti-personnel mines.

We recall that in the context of the complementary efforts that have been undertaken, our region is working towards becoming the first on the planet to be declared a region free of this scourge. That aim has already been established by the Organization of American States (OAS) in resolutions, since 1996 declaring the western hemisphere to be a zone free of anti-personnel landmines. That is why all the countries of this area must make every effort, as a top priority, to eliminate the danger of anti-personnel landmines from our region. The implementation of the Ottawa Convention and its worldwide application is an essential task in the ambitious programme being developed to expand the work. We make a commitment to undertake all efforts to enhance this. We are satisfied that Colombia ratified the Convention on 6 September last.

Unfortunately, the use of millions of mines affects all regions of the world. The removal of mines continues to be one of the most important challenges in the process of rebuilding societies in their post-conflict phase. That is why the Convention makes a very significant contribution, as it is the expression of a consensus of the international community to achieve the total prohibition of these artifacts which are contrary to international humanitarian law.

In Maputo the States parties, meeting for the first time, decided to continue efforts to make sure that the verification and implementation of measures to eradicate anti-personnel landmines should be as effective as expected under the Convention. We would like to say that positive results were achieved at the Second Meeting of the States Parties, held in Geneva last September. MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile are pleased to accept the offer made by the Government of Nicaragua to hold the Third Meeting in Managua. In this respect we wish to highlight the importance of the contribution of the countries of the region to inter-American demining activities through the Mine Clearance Assistance Mission in Central America (MARMINCA), which benefits Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The most lamentable effects continue to be seen in children and women who die or are mutilated as a result of this hidden weapon, a weapon with indiscriminate action and which does not respect any armistice, nor does it have the capacity to respect a ceasefire. In the study on the impact of armed conflicts on children, special attention is paid to the devastating long-term effects of these weapons of mass destruction. We are taking every step to ensure that cooperation in demining and assistance to victims is done in a manner which is in accordance with the negotiations in Oslo and under the Convention, in order to cover the fundamental aspects related to alleviating the suffering of populations and opening the way for their development. The United Nations has been focusing on this theme for a number of years, for example, the discussions in the Security Council on demining in the context of peacekeeping operations.

We are convinced that the essential aspect of the activities aimed at removing these anti-personnel landmines is the involvement of people and the creation of a safe environment to provide non-threatening conditions for health and social development. That is why the countries of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile should try, within the scope of their responsibilities, to contribute to solving the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. With this in mind, on 6 and 7 November next a regional seminar on the destruction of mines will be held in Buenos Aires. The seminar is organized by Argentina and Canada with the participation of the OAS and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, headquartered in Lima, to establish a discussion forum to reflect on the whole process of destroying stockpiled mines and the experience obtained in that task.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Under agenda item 73 (c) I wish to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", document A/C.1/55/L.40. The draft is based on General Assembly resolution 53/77 D, adopted by consensus in 1998. Therefore many of the provisions of the present text faithfully reproduce the provisions of that resolution.

The draft also has some new elements that reflect events and the measures that have been taken in implementation of resolution 53/77 D in the past two years. Thus, the seventh preambular paragraph recalls that the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons welcomed Mongolia's initiative. Operative paragraph 2 takes note of the adoption by the Mongolian Government of legislation on its nuclear-weapon-free status as a concrete step towards promoting the aims of nuclear non-proliferation. Operative paragraph 3 welcomes the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon States providing security assurances to Mongolia as a contribution to implementing resolution 53/77 D.

Since the P5 statement makes reference to Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, the draft resolution requests the Security Council to take note of that statement. As in the previous resolution on this item, operative paragraph 6 invites Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to strengthen its external security and nuclear-weapon-free status, while operative paragraph 8 requests the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia to take the necessary measures mentioned in operative paragraph 6. Operative paragraph 9 requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

I should like to underline that a spirit of goodwill, understanding and cooperation was present and felt in this Committee as well as during the consultations on the present draft, for which my delegation is deeply grateful. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their understanding and valuable support in promoting this question. That support creates an important incentive to pursue further the noble goal of defining and strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, as a contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and confidence-building. Bearing the above in mind, my delegation expresses the hope that the draft will be adopted without a vote or by consensus.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is introducing, for the consideration of the First Committee, the draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", document A/C.1/55/L.6.

As the Committee will be aware, Russia first put forward the initiative to consider issues of information security two years ago at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. We proceeded from the premise that the rapid progress of technology and means of information and telecommunications is acquiring today the nature of a global information revolution which affects all areas of the life of society — international relations, politics, economics, administration, finance, science and culture. Information resources are becoming one of the most valuable elements of both national and common human heritage. At the same time, serious concern arises in connection with the potential danger that the achievements in this field could be used for purposes that are inconsistent with universal progress and with the maintenance of international peace, stability and security in compliance with the principles of the non-use or threat of the use of force, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for human rights and freedoms.

It is important in this new area, that of information, not to allow possible confrontation to develop at the international level. Such a potential threat requires preventive measures. We see the possibility of moving forward the idea of international information security on the basis of a step-by-step approach, the expansion of geography and arenas for the consideration of the problem, gradually introducing concrete provisions relating to the common interests of security and stability into subsequent United Nations resolutions and decisions of other international forums.

The unanimously adopted General Assembly resolutions of last year and earlier years indicated the existence of the problem of international information security and called for further multilateral consideration of this problem. The draft that we are introducing at this session follows the mainstream of earlier decisions and is exclusively non-confrontational in nature, taking into account the considerations of a number of States. It states that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and that they influence the further progress of civilization. The preambular part calls attention to the fact that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the security of States in both the civil and military fields.

The operative part of the draft resolution contains a call to Member States to promote at multilateral levels the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security, as well as consideration of possible measures to limit the threats emerging in this field. It notes that the purpose of such measures could be served through the examination of relevant international concepts aimed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunications systems. The draft resolution suggests that all Member States should continue to inform the Secretary-General of their views and assessments on the issues of information security, basic notions related to information security, including unauthorized interference with or misuse of information and telecommunications systems and information resources, and the content of the concepts and approaches developed by States in this field.

In conclusion, I should like once more to emphasize that the Russian draft on information security does not have the goal of imposing a one-sided approach to this field, nor is it an attempt to introduce total control over information and telecommunications systems. On the contrary, it proposes to ensure democratic norms and the principle of the freedom of the mass media in the interests of civil society. The objective of the draft is to draw attention to potential threats to security that can arise as a result of the unlawful use of telecommunications systems and to allow States to express their points of view on this urgent problem. I call upon delegations to support the Russian draft, and I would like, as in previous years, that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Regional disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.34. At the present time, the major threats to international peace and security emanate from disputes and arms build-ups at the regional level. Many of the factors that drive regional arms races are specific to each region or subregion. To expect the realization of the goal of regional disarmament only through the adoption of global approaches is unrealistic. Global measures that lead to a more benign international environment do have a positive impact in containing regional arms races. These measures are therefore necessary but, by themselves, not sufficient to promote regional disarmament and security.

Asymmetries in defence capabilities also create the dangers of aggression and the use of force. That in turn could lead to the search for non-conventional means of self-defence and deterrence. On the other hand, conflicts and disputes in various regions also contribute to the acquisition and accumulation of armaments on a large scale, raising the possibilities for escalation and the scale of suffering in such conflicts. Regional approaches to international security, disarmament and non-proliferation have assumed special importance in the current international environment. Success or failure of security in disarmament measures in certain sensitive regions will have important regional and global impact. There have been welcome and positive trends in certain regions, but peace and disarmament have been damaged by recent developments in other regions.

We remain convinced that efforts to achieve regional disarmament must be pursued in tandem with global approaches to disarmament. They are essential to address the regional dynamics of each specific region. Initiatives to promote regional disarmament cannot be put on hold on the specious ground that only global approaches can ensure meaningful disarmament. The peoples of various regions that are burdened with increasing armaments and conflicts, cannot be told that they cannot have relief until the distant utopia of global disarmament has been achieved.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.34 affirms these propositions regarding the importance of regional disarmament. It takes into account most of the guidelines for regional disarmament adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. It also emphasizes that regional disarmament measures, by enhancing the security of regional States, will contribute to international peace and security by reducing the risk of regional conflicts. The draft resolution calls on States to conclude agreements, wherever possible, for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels.

The progress made towards nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in several parts of the world is a most encouraging sign of the potential of the regional approach to disarmament. Therefore the draft resolution welcomes the initiatives that have been taken by some States towards disarmament, non-proliferation and security at the regional and subregional levels and supports efforts for confidence-building measures also.

In conclusion, I should like to express, on behalf of the sponsors, our confidence that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Tóth (Hungary): I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42 and then make a statement on the same agenda item.

It is my privilege, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, on the Biological Weapons Convention. The following States are sponsors: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

In its preamble the draft resolution notes with satisfaction that there are 143 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It recalls the decision of the 1994 Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to establish an ad hoc group whose objective should be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

In its operative part the draft resolution welcomes the progress achieved so far negotiating a protocol to strengthen the Convention, and reaffirms the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the Ad Hoc Group to conclude negotiations as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference and to submit its report, which shall be adopted by consensus, to the States parties to be considered at a special conference.

Draft resolution L.42 calls upon all States parties in this context to accelerate the negotiations and to redouble their efforts within the Ad Hoc Group to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical regime and seek early resolution of the outstanding issues through renewed flexibility in order to complete the protocol in accordance with the decision of the Fourth Review Conference. It notes that at the request of the States parties a Fifth Review Conference will be held at Geneva from 19 November to 7 December 2001 and that, following appropriate consultations, a preparatory committee for that conference has been formed. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group and the special conference which is to consider the report of the Ad Hoc Group in accordance with its mandate.

May I express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, being co-sponsored by a large number of States parties to the Convention, be adopted, as previous resolutions have been traditionally, as a consensus report.

That concludes the introduction of the draft resolution, and I should now like to make a statement on the same agenda item.

The year 2000 marks important milestones of biological arms control and disarmament. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the 1925 Geneva Protocol put in the right historical and moral context the Ad Hoc Group negotiations in Geneva on the protocol to strengthen the BWC. Both dates serve as an indisputable reminder of why there is a need to uphold the legacy of arms control and disarmament through eliminating the deficiencies of precursor arrangements. There are various ways of describing the significant progress in the Ad Hoc Group negotiations since autumn 1999. The further consolidation of the rolling text through a sustained reduction in the total number of square brackets, the engagement of delegations in serious give-and-take on the most contentious outstanding issues, and the readiness to embrace new, more flexible methods of work are all true marks of a steady advance. All these indicators, however convincing, still might be interpreted as signs of trivial progress only for the insider world of arms control bureaucrats. Is this progress real? Is there a real political expectation and support for successfully concluding the negotiations?

More than a year from now the Fifth Review Conference of States Parties to the BWC will have to take stock of biological arms control and disarmament. By that time the protocol will have to be submitted to the Special Conference for approval. It might be appropriate to look beyond the parochial reality of the Geneva negotiations for clues on what the wider political universe is anticipating in this crucial period ahead of us.

May I enumerate some clues that, in my judgement, might be relevant. The March 2000 session of the Ad Hoc Group was marked by a series of foreign-ministerial and high-level statements made on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the BWC, all of them emphasizing the importance of the protocol and the need for an early conclusion to the negotiations. On 24 May in the Final Communiqué of the NATO Ministerial Meeting, it was stated, "We reiterate our commitment to efforts to achieve such an instrument as soon as possible before the Fifth Review Conference of the BTWC in 2001".

On 17 June, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Protocol the depositary Governments issued a statement calling for the strengthening of the BWC. In his paper, President Clinton said:

> "In my 1998 State of the Union address I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva in the Ad Hoc Group of the BW States parties towards achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC protocol that will further strengthen international security."

President Putin in his statement said:

> "As a depositary country Russia has constantly advocated the establishment of effective arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention and is taking an active part in the negotiations to develop a protocol to strengthen and improve the Convention."

In a statement issued on the seventy-fifth anniversary, France called on all parties to demonstrate the determination necessary to conclude these negotiations before the next review conference in 2001.

The G8 Foreign Ministers, and later the G8 heads of State and Government, addressed the issue as well. The Foreign Ministers meeting on 13 July said, "We will make the utmost efforts with others to conclude the negotiations on a Protocol which will effectively strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention as early as possible in 2001". The communiqué of the 23rd July meeting of the G8 heads of State and Government stated, "We commit ourselves with others to conclude the negotiations on the Verification Protocol ... as early as possible in 2001".

The statement following the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in July stated:

> "The Ministers reiterated their support for the work of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) ... on a verification protocol ... and their call for a speedy conclusion of the said negotiations."

The communiqué of the thirty-third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress in negotiating a verification protocol to strengthen the BWC by the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the BWC.

Finally, the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, reaffirmed

> "the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the conclusion of the negotiations by the Ad Hoc Group as soon as possible, before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference

> ... allowing sufficient time for the steps which would need to be taken for the consideration of the outcome of the Ad Hoc Group's work at a special conference to be held prior to the BWC 2001 Review Conference."

These high-level statements, subscribed to by practically all States, great and small, north and south, east and west, are sending the same political messages: the urgency of the successful completion of the negotiations on the protocol. Now it is up to decision-makers in capitals and negotiators in Geneva to match the dedication of political leaders with an equal amount of ingenuity and devotion in order to finalize the protocol. The task is not easy, as the results of the negotiations must be acceptable individually for each and collectively for all of us. But the words of the heads of State, heads of Government and foreign ministers are loud and clear. The task can be done and is worth doing.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I should like to address the First Committee on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.42, on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, and on the statement that Ambassador Tóth has just made.

For six years now negotiations have been proceeding in Geneva on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) to ensure compliance with that treaty's provisions. The Netherlands' endeavours remain fully directed towards completion of these important negotiations as soon as is practicable. Much has been achieved in the Geneva negotiations to resolve the many issues that need to be tackled if we are to strengthen the Convention. As in all negotiations, the protocol must reflect a fair bargain between the varying positions of different countries. But we would prefer more of a committal protocol than a simple bargain in which neither compliance nor cooperation objectives are met properly.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to concluding negotiations on the protocol before the Fifth Review Conference next year. We therefore fully support the efforts of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, Ambassador Tóth, to reach agreement among all States parties and to conclude our negotiations in Geneva at the latest in 2001.

The Netherlands is fully committed to the negotiations on the protocol, and our candidacy for the seat of the future organization is clear testimony of that commitment. It is also the reason that we feel we have a somewhat special relationship with the negotiations. Last week we submitted a concrete and substantive bid to the friend of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Group, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan. The Netherlands has made a very generous offer for this seat with regard to the facilities for the organization, its financial implications and privileges and immunities. My Government will take all the necessary measures so that the organization and its member States can benefit to the maximum from optimum working conditions, as well as take advantage of the presence of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. In short, I assure the Committee that our candidacy for the future organization of the BWC will be an offer that the Committee cannot refuse.

Programme of work

The Chairman: Before adjourning this meeting I should like to inform members that for the next phase of the Committee's work — namely, action on draft resolutions — an informal paper setting out the clusters of the draft resolutions submitted this year, will be circulated to delegations tomorrow, Friday, 20 October.

The Committee will meet again on 20 October at 10 a.m. in this same room to continue its second phase of work.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/55/PV.19

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee

19th meeting

Friday, 20 October 2000, 10.00 a.m.

New York

Chairman: U Mya Than .... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Before proceeding to the list of speakers I should like to inform the members of the Committee that the informal paper setting out the clusters of draft resolutions has been circulated to all delegations.

Mr. Lezona (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair our work. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

The problem of the illicit circulation of and trade in small arms is continuing today both in regions engaged in armed conflict and in those in which peace and security have been solidly established. My country, which has had the sad and painful experience of war, and which now wishes to forget this terrible chapter of its history, considers today's debate very important. That is why we welcome the decision of the United Nations to organize in 2001 a Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, and we hope to make our contribution to enriching the programme of action that will be adopted.

In that context, we are actively participating in the preparations for the Bamako meeting next December, which will coordinate the African position on the question. For stress must be placed on solidarity and cooperation among States and others involved in working for effective international action to stem the trade in small arms, its effects, and the destitution it causes.

Backed by fruitful experience, at both national and subregional level, and in particular the signing of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreements concluded on 16 November 1999 at Pointe-Noire and on 29 December 1999 at Brazzaville between national forces and the armed factions of the rebellion, through the mediation of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, my country has associated itself with others as a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Assistance to States for curbing illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them" (document A/C.1/55/L.11). We ask for the full support of the First Committee so that the draft resolution can be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, my country would like to take advantage of this opportunity once again to thank the United Nations, and its Department for Disarmament Affairs, Department of Political Affairs and Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, for the assistance they have kindly provided and will be providing to the Congo in gathering information on small arms and in reintegrating former combatants following the action taken by the Congolese Government.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and the Preparatory Committee for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, for the tireless and commendable efforts they are making in working for disarmament, peace, stability and the development of all nations and for the success of the Conference in 2001, of which we have great expectations.

Mr. Kongstad (Norway): I have asked for the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", document A/C.1/55/L.44. The draft resolution was presented by Mozambique, Nicaragua and Norway jointly and is now co-sponsored by the following countries: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Gabon, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, the Niger, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, the following countries are also sponsors of the draft resolution: Angola, the Bahamas, Cape Verde, Greece, Honduras, Malaysia, Maldives, Seychelles and Trinidad and Tobago.

We are grateful to all those delegations that have given their support to this year's draft resolution by their sponsorship. The large number of sponsors represents broad and geographically widespread support, reflecting the importance attached to the mine ban Convention.

The problems caused by anti-personnel mines are among the great tragedies of our time. Anti-personnel mines kill and maim innocent civilians, including women and children, long after hostilities have ended. As remnants of war they seriously hamper economic and social development. They deny to societies and individuals basic humanitarian needs and human rights.

The mine ban Convention has established a political and legal framework for international cooperation on assistance to mine victims and mine clearance, including stockpile destruction. The overall objective of the Convention is to prevent new victims and to support survivors. To this end, the main focus remains on practical mine action activities in the field. In order to maintain momentum and be able to continue to mobilize the resources required for activities in the field, we also need a continuous multilateral process and an international focal point. Within the framework of the mine ban Convention, that is taken care of by the annual meetings of States parties and the inter-sessional work programme. It was significant that a large number of countries, particularly mine-affected countries and relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, actively participated in the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which took place in Geneva in September this year. It is equally important that the annual meetings of States parties and the inter-sessional work programme have managed to maintain the cooperative spirit, thus bringing about the essential partnership between mine-affected and other countries and between governments and non-governmental organizations. Another interesting feature of these meetings is the open-endedness that attracts the participation of both States parties and non-States parties to the Convention alike.

We still have a long way to go to solve the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. However, there are several encouraging developments which demonstrate that the Ottawa process and the Convention banning anti-personnel mines are making a difference. It is shown by the growing number of Governments acceding to and fully implementing the Convention, the significantly reduced use of anti-personnel mines, the dramatic drop in the production of such mines, the increased destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, the increased funding for mine action, more land being demined and, most importantly, the decreasing number of victims.

This year's draft resolution on the implementation of the mine ban Convention is an updated version of last year's resolution. In the preambular part we have added one paragraph recalling the Second Meeting of States Parties and corrected the number of States that have formally accepted the obligations of the Convention — now 107. In the operative part we have added a new paragraph welcoming the generous offer of the Government of Nicaragua to host the Third Meeting of States parties in September 2001 in Managua and consequently made an adjustment to the following operative paragraph.

We invite all those delegations in a position to do so to co-sponsor the draft resolution and would welcome the broadest possible support for it.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): I congratulate Norway on its leadership in the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and on the introduction of this text, which Canada wholeheartedly supports.

The draft resolution marks real and very heartening progress against landmines. At the recent Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, that progress was reviewed in detail and celebrated. More than 100 States have now formally accepted the obligations of the Convention, and together we are making a difference. Mine casualty rates are down, mine clearance proceeds apace, more and better help is reaching mine victims, some $250 million was allocated by donors last year to the ongoing campaign, more than 20 States parties have completed stockpile destruction, and the norms of the Convention are gaining influence and the practical respect of many still outside the pact. Moreover, the inter-sessional work programme has been inclusive, collegial, open, transparent, well focused and successful. Over the years to come that programme warrants the participation of all relevant actors whether or not they are States parties. Canada believes that, given all the good the Convention's implementation does in the world, this draft resolution as well warrants its full support.

Mr. Luck (Australia): I am taking the floor very briefly to offer our support to the delegations of Norway, Nicaragua and Mozambique on their draft resolution, document A/C.1/55/L.44, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

This past year has seen some gratifying consolidation and expansion of the norm against anti-personnel landmines which the Ottawa Convention has established. But as the delegation of Norway has already pointed out, we have a long way to go. We would like to recognize Norway's own important role over the past few months, including at the recent Meeting of States Parties. We now have a mechanism for more structured follow-up work in the form of the inter-sessional work programme, and in our view that mechanism is working well. It is leading to better coordination of mine action activities across the spectrum of issues that require attention. So when we encourage universalization of the Convention, we should at the same time aim for maximum participation in the inter-sessional work programme.

The focus of the draft resolution is again on the twin goals of universalization and effective implementation of the Convention, in particular the aspects of it which deal with the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of mine victims and mine clearance, as highlighted in operative paragraph 6. Like Norway and Canada, we hope the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus, as have its predecessors.

Mr. Mouro (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Brazil, on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MECOSUR) countries — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated countries of Bolivia and Chile, would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance that we attach to the adoption of measures designed to regulate the international maritime transport of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel, with the highest possible levels of security. We wish to recall the concepts that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay expressed in a Joint Declaration of 17 January 1997, issued as an official document of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Among those concepts the strengthening of the regulation of the transportation of radioactive material should include the timely notification regarding routes, the commitment to recover radioactive waste in case of accidents to ships and the payment of indemnities in case of damages. Thus, we are obliged to advocate all relevant forums continued improvement in all regulations and measures designed to make that transport safer in accordance with the general principles of international law today.

We believe that the notion of the abuse of rights in the context of highly dangerous activities and the system of objective responsibility form a good theoretical base on which to build effectively. Within the framework of the competent international bodies we are highly satisfied by the actions of the IAEA under resolution GC(42)RES/13, designed to encourage cooperation among international organizations that are involved in ensuring the safety of the transportation of radioactive materials, the establishment of service of security evaluation in transport, and the organization of training courses.

We would also like to highlight the adoption of resolution GC(43)RES/11, which urges States that practise such types of transport to provide guarantees that their regulations are governed by the regulations laid down by the IAEA and that they will fulfil their commitment to provide timely information concerning routes. The forty-fourth General Conference of the IAEA adopted resolution GC(44)RES/17, which progressively strengthens the international regulatory regime for the transport of radioactive materials, in line with the position of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile. That resolution includes important points such as the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment, the importance of protecting populations and the environment of small island States and other coastal States, and the importance of effective mechanisms of responsibility for damage caused by operations of international maritime transport of radioactive waste.

All these efforts have also been reflected in the report of the Disarmament Commission on nuclear-weapon-free zones, which promotes cooperation between them in applying regulations for the transport of these materials, and in the Final Document adopted by the last Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which establishes the role of security in the international transport of radioactive materials.

Mr. Petőcz (Slovakia): I should like to speak about the activities related to the amended mines Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Since this is the first time I have taken the floor, let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Secretariat. Allow me to assure you of my fullest support in your endeavours to advance the work of this important body.

From 15 to 17 December 1999 the First Annual Conference of States Parties to Amended Protocol II, the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), was held in Geneva. The Conference decided to recommend me for election as President of the Second Annual Conference, to be held from 11 to 13 December this year. After the resignation of Ambassador Johan Molander of Sweden, the President of the First Annual Conference, I took over as Acting President.

The First Annual Conference requested its President to carry out a number of tasks referred to in its report, inter alia, on behalf of the States parties, to exercise his authority to achieve the goal of the universality of amended Protocol II. To this effect, I have undertaken a series of consultations with non-States parties to amended Protocol II to encourage their adherence. Furthermore, in May I sent a letter to Ministers for Foreign Affairs of those States inviting their authorities to consider adherence to this instrument. That letter was sent after the Secretary-General had issued his own appeal, with similar content, addressed to the heads of State and/or Government of those States. As of today, 56 States have given notification of their consent to be bound by amended Protocol II. That represents an increment of 10 additional States since the First Annual Conference took place. Moreover, I have received positive signals indicating that several more accessions are under way. Quantitatively, 56 may not seem a very high number, yet it is commensurate with the relatively short time the Protocol has been in force. But in considering its universality qualitatively, it is indisputable that almost all of the largest inventories are already covered by this instrument. That is quite a persuasive argument for the Protocol's credibility. However, vigorous endeavours towards its further universalization should continue unabated. The focus should be oriented primarily towards those regions with the lowest level of adherence. In this respect, I should like to refer to one of the conclusions of the First Annual Conference, calling on States parties to promote wider adherence to amended Protocol II in their respective regions. Let me once again, here in the First Committee, reiterate the call to those States that have not yet acceded to amended Protocol II to do so at the earliest possible date.

The First Annual Conference established the group of experts as its subsidiary body to consider several issues under amended Protocol II. That group, chaired by Colonel Erwin Dahinden of Switzerland, made eight concrete recommendations which were subsequently adopted by the Conference. Specifically, recommendation H called for structured discussions on the subjects of international technical information exchange, international cooperation on mine clearance, technical cooperation and assistance, and development of viable and cost-effective technologies that could eventually replace anti-personnel landmines. In this connection, I have undertaken a series of informal consultations which indicated support for the continuation of work on the above subjects during the inter-sessional period. Therefore, I proposed the holding of an informal meeting of experts of the States parties. The meeting was held on 31 May and 2 June this year in Geneva. Let me now briefly inform the Committee of the topics addressed during its deliberations.

The question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of subsidiary bodies was raised by a number of States parties. Although the participation of non-governmental organizations may be beneficial to the work of the group of experts because of their valuable technical expertise and knowledge, other States parties expressed concern that it should not take on a political orientation and that the question should be subject to further discussion. During my consultations in the process of preparing for the Second Annual Conference I have tried to identify a consensual formula on the involvement of non-governmental organizations that would be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference. In addition, the following ideas came up at the meeting: the possible establishment of a central clearing house of relevant information in the area of mine clearance, mine detection and other mine-related data, available for all important actors active in these fields; the possible establishment of an Internet home page with a view to improving the dissemination and management of international information in the context of amended Protocol II; and the possibility of future meetings on international cooperation and assistance.

Some States parties expressed their concern about the duplication of existing activities in the above-mentioned areas, especially with regard to anti-personnel landmines. In order to avoid such duplication, it may be necessary to closely coordinate future work in the area of international cooperation and assistance in the context of amended Protocol II with the inter-sessional activities of the Ottawa Convention. More specifically, I should like to promote cooperation and a relationship between these two important instruments that would multiply the synergistic effect of both, focusing primarily on the humanitarian aspects of their implementation. In this respect, I have already conducted a number of consultations.

Technical presentations and expositions are a possible means to foster technical cooperation and assistance. That kind of activity could be organized within the framework of the Second Annual Conference. With a view to the next CCW Review Conference, extensive consideration was given to possible improvements to amended Protocol II. The views on this question were quite divergent. The meeting, however, considered that the group of experts would serve as an important forum for continuing discussion and further exploration of this matter at an expert level. It also suggested that technical aspects relating to the CCW Review Conference should be discussed at an expert level. The importance of allocating sufficient time for a thorough preparation of the 2001 Conference was stressed. Finally, the meeting elaborated the idea of having a technical demonstration that could improve the background knowledge in terms of technical substance for the upcoming negotiations. The Swiss delegation announced that it was willing to carry out such a technical demonstration.

National annual reports are a very important source of structured information in the context of amended Protocol II. This instrument could be further improved if appropriate guidelines on how to fill out the different forms were developed. In this regard, the possibility of including additional forms, or improving existing ones, was also discussed. I take this opportunity to remind all States parties that have not yet submitted their national annual reports in accordance with the recommendation of the First Annual Conference — that is, eight weeks prior to the convening of annual conferences — to do so as soon as possible, as required by article 13, paragraph 4 of the Protocol.

In conclusion, let me commend Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China, Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria and the Chairman of the group of experts, Colonel Erwin Dahinden, for their cooperation. I appreciate the cooperation of all State and non-State actors, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the other organizations engaged in humanitarian demining activities. Last but not least, I should like to express my thanks to the Geneva branch of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for all its efforts to assist the Conference.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): On behalf of 59 sponsoring delegations, including my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.50, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. My delegation appreciates the support it has received for this draft resolution, manifested in the large number of sponsoring countries. For the sake of brevity I will refrain from reading aloud the names of the 59 sponsors. We still welcome additional sponsoring delegations for this draft resolution.

The 1980 Convention is a framework convention with four annexed Protocols. Protocol I, adopted on 10 October 1980, deals with fragmentation weapons. Amended Protocol II, adopted on 3 May 1996, concerns the use on land of mines, booby traps and other devices. The third Protocol, on incendiary weapons, was adopted on 10 October 1980, and on 13 October 1995 Protocol IV, dealing with blinding laser weapons, was adopted. The Convention and its Protocols constitute a very essential and integral part of international law applicable to armed conflicts. The significantly increased occurrence of civilians being afflicted by armed conflicts since the end of the cold war is reason enough for us all to intensify our efforts to have the Convention and its Protocols fully implemented.

The purpose of the Convention and the Protocols is to place constraints on the conduct of war by restricting the use of conventional weapons which may cause excessive injuries or have indiscriminate effects on its victims. When implemented, the rules contained in these instruments will limit the suffering of civilians as well as combatants. The draft resolution before the Committee therefore calls upon all States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols and to adhere to the provisions therein. If these instruments are made universal and their provisions are implemented and effectively adhered to, lives can be saved and suffering reduced. In this context, I should like to thank all those countries that have recently acceded to, or in other ways taken positive action towards adherence to, the Convention and its Protocols.

The Convention offers a framework for negotiations to gradually redefine or expand the categories of conventional weapons covered by the Protocols. The last Review Conference, in 1995, which continued in 1996, was an opportunity at which the High Contracting Parties succeeded in strengthening Protocol II and adopted the new Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons, Protocol IV. We are very pleased to note that both instruments have entered into force. The draft resolution before the Committee reflects these and other positive developments. Under amended Protocol II, States parties continue to meet annually to consult and cooperate with each other on all issues related to the operation of the Protocol. The First Annual Conference was held last December in Geneva, and this year's Second Annual Conference will be convened from 11 to 13 December in Geneva under the presidency of Ambassador Petöcz of Slovakia. In this context, we welcome the efforts made by Ambassador Petöcz to achieve the universality of amended Protocol II. I thank him for his statement reporting on his own efforts as well as those of the Secretary-General in this regard, and also reporting on the work conducted in May/June this year by the Group of Experts in Geneva. The draft resolution commends the efforts of both the President of the Conference and the Secretary-General towards the goal of the universality of amended Protocol II.

I should like to join Ambassador Petöcz in recalling the conclusion of the First Annual Conference calling on States parties to promote wider adherence to amended Protocol II in their respective regions. We hope that this year's Conference on the Protocol will provide a good opportunity to exchange views and thoughts concerning the operation and effect of the Protocol as well as on means to achieve further adherence to this instrument. We encourage all States, as well as the International Committee of the Red

Cross and other interested non-governmental organizations, to participate.

The draft resolution also addresses the issue of convening the second Review Conference for the Convention in 2001. It recommends that the Review Conference be held next December in Geneva. It is our understanding that there is a need for thorough preparation for the Review Conference, and therefore the draft resolution calls for two weeks of meetings of the Preparatory Committee, in addition to the one-day session on 14 December this year that has already been decided upon. The Review Conferences are important tools for addressing all issues concerning the Convention and its Protocols, how the operation of these instruments might be improved and how the Convention might be developed further. We hope that the Review Conference next year will be used to further strengthen the protection of civilians in situations of conflict and to improve the humanitarian situation after conflicts have ended. It is also our hope that States parties will take the opportunity offered to discuss whether other categories of conventional weapons should be regulated under the Convention and whether additional protocols would be desirable. We express our appreciation of the statement made by Ambassador Luck in the First Committee earlier this session that Australia would be willing to serve as President of the Review Conference in 2001.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.50 intends to promote further universalization of and adherence to this very important body of humanitarian law. It also intends to promote a successful Review Conference in 2001 by providing for a thorough preparatory process. On behalf of all its sponsors I wish to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case with last year's resolution.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): As in previous years, my delegation wishes to take the floor in the First Committee in support of the draft resolution introduced by Sweden, contained in document A/C.1/55/L.50, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, generally known as the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Convention and its Protocols are a major instrument of international humanitarian law and serve to reduce unnecessary suffering of combatants and civilians. They build on the fundamental norm of the law of armed conflict that military necessity in armed conflict has to be constantly set against the humanitarian objective of preventing unnecessary suffering. It is imperative to apply this norm to all categories of conventional weapons and munitions, and my delegation therefore welcomes the initiative taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross recently to study the modalities for a new fifth protocol to the Convention to deal with remnants of war. The purpose of such a new protocol would be to reduce hazards for, in particular, the civilian population posed by unexploded ordnance after hostilities have ceased. In fact, unexploded ordnance should self-destruct or deactivate, as appropriate, at the moment it no longer serves a military purpose.

My delegation looks forward to beginning deliberations on a new protocol at any appropriate time. At the same time, it is necessary to promote the effectiveness of the existing instruments through adherence by all States. My delegation therefore fully supports the call, contained in operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution, for States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible. We also welcome the preparatory process, as defined in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, to prepare for the next Review Conference, to be held, it is hoped, in December 2001.

I should like to conclude by expressing our appreciation to Ambassador Luck of Australia for his willingness to work with us and others to strengthen further the CCW and its Protocols. We fully support his candidature for the presidency of the Review Conference. We join the Swedish delegation in expressing the wish that this important draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Luck (Australia): I should like to support the draft resolution in document A/C.1/55/L.50, just introduced by the delegation of Sweden and supported by the delegations of Slovakia and the Netherlands, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects" (CCW). The Convention and its Protocols constitute a key instrument of international humanitarian law, and one that we have supported strongly through its development and augmentation. Others have just outlined its key obligations, so I do not need to do so again. Suffice it to say that without this instrument, and the adherence of key States to its obligations, the suffering of both combatants and civilian victims of armed conflict would increase.

As a State party to the Convention and all its Protocols, Australia feels very strongly about the need for a concerted effort to achieve their universalization. The calls in operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution, which is traditionally adopted by consensus, will, it is hoped, prove that we share this goal not only with States parties but also with the entire international community. The goal of universalization should be an integral part of the ongoing work of the Convention and its Protocols. We are also supportive of efforts to strengthen the instrument, with a view to maintaining its value and relevance. In that regard, we will look carefully at all proposals put forward in the context of the forthcoming Review Conference of the Convention and approach these proposals with an open mind and an underlying motivation to improve this instrument wherever possible.

We welcome the decision in operative paragraph 5 to establish a Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference. The proposals under consideration will require careful study, and we will need to remain flexible on the issue of the allocation of time for preparatory work, but the proposed programme in operative paragraph 5 is a good start.

I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate that Australia would be willing to serve as President of the 2001 Review Conference. We look forward to the support of other States parties to the Convention for our candidature and in that vein warmly welcome the expression of support just made by the Netherlands, as well as the interest and encouragement we have received from other delegations present here. Finally, I should like to join preceding speakers on this issue in expressing the wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Mochochoko (Lesotho): I have the pleasure of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.14/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa". The draft resolution is presented by Lesotho in its capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of October and Togo as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States. Since its submission last Friday the draft resolution has been slightly revised and thus reissued as A/C.1/55/L.14/Rev.1 in order to meet the concerns of all delegations.

I wish to make a few more minor revisions. In operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution all the words after the word "contributions" in the third line should be deleted and replaced by the following wording:

> "in order to strengthen the programmes and activities of the Regional Centre and facilitate their implementation;".

That revision has been made in order to harmonize this year's draft resolution with last year's resolution.

Except for minor revisions the current draft resolution is in all material respects the same as last year's resolution, which was adopted by consensus. In short, the preambular paragraphs refer, among other things, to the Charter provisions relating to the General Assembly's functions in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and arms limitation, and recalls all previous resolutions on the Centre.

In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution takes note of the Secretary-General's report and commends the activities of the Centre and the support of African States for it. It reaffirms the need to revitalize the Centre and in this regard for the Centre to be provided with the necessary resources. An appeal is made for all to make voluntary contributions to enable the Centre to meet the demands of the membership, and to this end the Secretary-General is requested to continue to provide all necessary support, including by facilitating close cooperation between the Centre and the OAU.

The draft resolution reflects the importance the African Group continues to attach to the work of the Centre. It is the African Group's hope that once again this year the First Committee will show its solidarity with Africa by adopting the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Ragab (Egypt): I have the pleasure of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", document A/C.1/55/L.16. Such resolutions have been adopted annually by the General Assembly since 1974. Since 1980 the Assembly has adopted them by consensus — the consensus that has emerged in the General Assembly over the years as a result of the steadfast support it received in bilateral declarations and in various multilateral forums.

Just recently, the 1999 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus principles and guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned. The 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) also adopted by consensus an initiative encouraging all States, especially States of the Middle East, to reaffirm or declare their support for the objective of establishing an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction; to transmit their declarations of support to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and to take practical steps towards that objective. These commitments constitute a clear testimony to the viability and relevance of this concept in the Middle East.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly contribute to ending the proliferation of the threat from nuclear weapons, would strengthen the security of all States of the region and, consequently, would be deemed an important confidence-building measure towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. For more than 18 years the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone has been unanimously anticipated, a record that is testimony to the overwhelming support for the creation of the zone. However, the plain truth is that this objective seems to be eluding us. No concrete measures, no operational measures and no serious talks have yet been held, formally or informally, among regional parties with a view to bringing into practice what all of us here seem to aspire to and preach. Despite the general frustration over the stagnation of the efforts to establish the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, Egypt firmly supports the implementation of the resolution adopted annually by this body. Egypt continues to be committed to the earliest establishment and implementation of the principles and provisions of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and, indeed, of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. In a region fraught with tension, such as the Middle East, the zone cannot be looked upon as an a posteriori peace dividend but as an essential confidence-building measure facilitating and leading the way towards a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Though we fully realize that peace, security and stability in the region of the Middle East will be achieved only when a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of disputes in the Middle East are attained, it is essential to create the necessary conditions and suitable climate to facilitate the achievement of this objective. In our view, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would contribute substantially in this regard.

It is our considered opinion that the time is now more than ripe to proceed towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. For this reason operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution endeavours once again to utilize the good offices of the Secretary-General in order to inject the required impetus into this process. It would be timely for us today to seriously embark on laying the solid foundations on which to proceed. In this regard, the same operative paragraph requests the Secretary-General to pursue his consultations with the States of the region and other concerned parties.

I also invite the Committee's attention to the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 9, in which reference is made to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This initiative aims at broadening the scope of the 1974 initiative by adding to it chemical and biological weapons. Since the announcement of this initiative by President Hosni Mubarak on 9 April 1990, later encompassed by his broader initiative in June 1998 to convene an international conference to free the world from all weapons of mass destruction, the 1990 initiative has been attracting an ever-growing degree of support. The Security Council, for example, adopted resolution 687 (1991), dated 8 April 1991, paragraph 14 of which reiterates in essence the need to work towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, the Secretary-General proposed in his Millennium report, document A/54/2000, the convening of a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

Finally, I commend to the First Committee this draft resolution and earnestly hope that it will receive the same support that similar resolutions have received in previous years, and will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Mohammed (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation wishes to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.16, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

All the Arab States have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nevertheless, their adherence has not provided them with the necessary security requirements in the face of the continuing Israeli nuclear threat. The international community, represented by specialized agencies, did not assume the required role to put a stop to the Israeli nuclear threat or to compel Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. When the Iraqi nuclear facilities placed under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were subjected to an aggression by the Zionist entity in 1981, the Security Council adopted resolution 487 (1981) calling upon that entity to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. But up to the present moment it has refused to comply with that resolution or with other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. That entity's blatant defiance of international resolutions, coupled with its expansionist policy at the expense of Arab territories, all subject the region to very serious threats. In addition, the practices of the Zionist entity recently in the occupied Palestinian territories and the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan are but the latest proof that there is a fragile security situation in the region as a result of the policies of that entity. That is why the security and stability of the Middle East necessitates doing away with all weapons of mass destruction so as to make the zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, in pursuance of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Israel's continuing nuclear programme outside the international regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the refusal of the Zionist entity to adhere to the NPT, or to place its facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the IAEA, presents a threat to Arab national security and diminishes the credibility and universality of the NPT. The consecration of the status quo by forcing all the States of the region, with the exception of Israel, to adhere to the regime of non-proliferation represents a selective policy and an imbalance which threatens the security and stability of the region. It is not acceptable. That is why the international community must demand universal guarantees for the implementation of all the provisions dealing with non-proliferation without applying a double standard, and to adopt all the necessary measures which will achieve that purpose, in keeping with the provisions of the Charter.

Our delegation will join the consensus on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/55/L.16, even though it does not fully satisfy the concerns we have just expressed, which could have been included in the draft resolution, because of the dangers represented by Israeli nuclear weapons to international peace and security at the regional and international levels.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Colombian delegation has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group on the agenda item regarding transparency in armaments.

The strengthening of regional peace and security is one of the key objectives of the countries members of the Rio Group, and we are convinced that the application of measures to build confidence and promote security will help to create a favourable climate for the effective limitation of conventional arms, which, in turn, will make it possible to devote a larger proportion of resources to economic and social development. In this regard, the heads of State and Government of the region pledged at the Second Summit of the Americas, which was held in Santiago, Chile, in 1998, to continue to promote transparency in defence policies concerning, inter alia, modernization of their armed forces, comparisons of military expenditures in the region and the improvement and expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The member countries of the Rio Group, in order to promote a lasting structure of peace and cooperation among the States, have pledged, within the framework of the inter-American system, to accept as the guiding principle of disarmament, and of policies for the control and limitation of arms at the regional level, the need to promote security and stability with the lowest possible level of forces that meets legitimate defence requirements. We also committed ourselves to contribute effectively to international efforts in this area, in accordance with the Constitutions and domestic laws of our countries, as well as with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Charter of the United Nations.

In this regard, in June 1999 in Guatemala City the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions was opened for signature. The objective of this Convention is to contribute to greater openness and transparency in the procurement of conventional arms through the exchange of information on procurements, with a view to promoting confidence among the States of the region. In addition to imports and exports, the States parties must also provide information on procurements through national production. Moreover, States that are not members of the OAS can contribute to the aims of the Convention by providing information on exports and imports to countries that are members of the OAS. We, the countries of the Rio Group, reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions.

Since the adoption of resolution 46/36 L this Committee has been debating the necessity of including information on the production and stockpiling of the seven categories of arms covered by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In this regard, we have taken note of the conclusions of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, document A/55/281, which mentions that with respect to the further development of the Register, the Group had examined the possibility of including procurement by national production. In this regard, we should like to state that the Group reaffirmed the objective of expanding without delay the scope of the Register and welcomed the growing number of States that voluntarily submit reports on their military arsenals and procurement by national production.

Trade in arms is only one phase in the life cycle of arms, which begins with the process of research and development, then enters the production phase and, finally, the trading phase. Thus, policies aimed solely at the last stage of the cycle, arms trade, will be incomplete and ineffective if the transparency measures are not applied to the entire cycle. We also note that the Group considered the possibility of including small arms and light weapons within the scope of the Register, but decided to await the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In addition, the Group of Experts acknowledged in its report the importance of the principle of transparency and its relevance to weapons of mass destruction. In its analysis of the proposals to add a new category to include such weapons, the Group considered the nature of the Register, the concerns about regional security and existing international legal instruments on the subject, as well as General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. Taking all these factors into account, especially the fact that the Register covers only conventional arms, the Group agreed that the item of transparency in weapons of mass destruction was a subject that should be taken up by the General Assembly.

It is necessary to involve arms-producing countries so that they will discourage investment in research and development for new types of arms, promote the conversion of military industries and appropriately monitor trading circuits and arms transfers to prevent diversion into illicit channels. By the same token, arms-importing countries should exercise moderation in their demand and thus avoid promoting arms races. Greater openness and transparency in armaments should help to promote mutual confidence, reduce tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security while allowing us to advance to the more ambitious phase of self-control in the procurement, manufacture and transfer of conventional arms in order to prevent the arms races that are already manifest in regions where new weapons systems and advanced launching systems have already been introduced.

Mr. Nhleko (Swaziland): Since I am taking the floor for the first time, permit me to associate the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland with the kind sentiments expressed to you, Sir, following your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you that the Committee is already benefiting from your expertise and forthrightness in conducting its debate.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has always attached great importance to the work of the United Nations in ensuring that the threat caused by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is totally eliminated. Now more than ever, the dangers of nuclear proliferation require our continued vigilance, and the role played by the United Nations in creating a stable security environment is more crucial than ever before. Our leaders at the recent historic Millennium Summit reaffirmed the need to maintain peace and security more effectively when they declared, in paragraph 8 of the Millennium Declaration, that "We will ... seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction." Notwithstanding the United Nations achievements in this regard, we note very sadly that some regions of the world remain in serious danger. At the same time, some countries that still possess nuclear weapons have not fulfilled their commitments under the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Thus, the world faces the spectre of a nuclear war for the first time since the end of the cold war. In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate the call by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): with the end of the cold war there is no justification for the maintenance of nuclear arsenals or concepts of international security based on promoting and developing military alliances and policies of nuclear deterrence.

Despite the different perspectives that States members may have on the current state of affairs in global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues, there is no doubt that much more can be done, and needs to be done. The common dream of a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is yet to be realized. Nuclear disarmament is the responsibility of all States, and all of them must be involved in the process leading to that goal. To that end, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, is central for to the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. My delegation supports efforts being undertaken at the Conference on Disarmament to restart negotiations without delay on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally effective and verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material. This we do in the sincere hope that all States which have not yet done so will eventually stop the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The Kingdom of Swaziland will continue to encourage the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons and adherence by all States to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. We acknowledge the steps taken in this direction towards applying increased transparency in the field of nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we urge all non-nuclear-weapon States to conclude agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a view to enabling the IAEA to carry out its work unimpeded. The IAEA's international safeguards system has proved to be of great value in nuclear non-proliferation, and for this reason we must make sure that the existing safeguards system is strengthened to enhance the Agency's ability to detect clandestine nuclear activity and ensure the efficiency of the resulting safeguards system.

The Kingdom of Swaziland welcomes the steady increase in the number of ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is a key instrument in the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. The Treaty's early entry into force still remains a high priority for the international community, and we trust that the drive for ratification set up by the Secretary-General during the Millennium Summit will continue to yield positive results and that before long the required number of ratifications will be obtained. My delegation wishes to commend the role played by civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations, in disarmament issues. Their expertise and dedication to many of the issues with which we are constantly faced has been crucial. Their contribution to and work in our endeavour to build a safer and better world does not go unnoticed.

Finally, our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons requires as a key element that nuclear proliferation be controlled. We in Swaziland believe that increased vigilance on non-proliferation is essential to achieve that goal. It is important that we all continue to support efforts aimed at strengthening strict, effective and complete disarmament so that we can create a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.36, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Viet Nam and my own delegation.

The Charter's most fundamental principle states that Member States in their international relations must refrain from the use or threat of use of force. This obligation applies to the use or threat of force with all kinds of weapons. In 1929, an article in *The New York Times* by Will Rogers stated, "You can't say civilization don't advance, however, for in every war they kill you in a new way."

Unfortunately, after the Second World War the emergence of nuclear weapons completely changed the nature of war and the manner in which people would be killed. The very first United Nations General Assembly resolution affirmed the need to outlaw nuclear weapons. The fundamental obligation not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons is thus based on the Charter's prohibition of the use or threat of use of force.

When the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was being negotiated the non-nuclear-weapon States sought credible and binding guarantees that they would not be threatened by the use of nuclear weapons and that in case of such a threat, the nuclear-weapon States would come to their assistance. The response to these expectations was dismal and ultimately is the source of much of the nuclear danger that we confront today. Security guarantees were not written into the NPT, nor into a protocol. The Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, convened in 1968 at Pakistan's initiative, was prevented by the NPT's main sponsors from reaching a consensus. The security assurances offered by three nuclear-weapon States in Security Council resolution 255 (1968) were partial and conditional, as were the unilateral statements that were made in 1979 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That special session called for the conclusion of an international instrument on security guarantees by the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, after more than two decades, the Conference has been unable to conclude such an international agreement.

During the cold war the Conference on Disarmament could not evolve a common formula for the offer of unconditional and credible assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. The nuclear-weapon States wished to exclude non-nuclear-weapon States members of the rival alliances. There was considerable hope that with the end of the cold war a common formula would become possible. Unfortunately, the nuclear-weapon States have proceeded in the opposite direction. After the indefinite extension of the NPT, Security Council resolution 984 (1995) was even more limited in scope and credibility than its predecessor, Security Council resolution 255 (1968). Some nuclear Powers asserted the right to retain their nuclear weapons indefinitely. Statements were made reserving the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, even those States that are parties to the NPT or parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones, in case these States used or threatened the use of other weapons of mass destruction. That represented a significant erosion of even the limited assurances contained in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995). Later, a nuclear alliance announced a new doctrine which envisaged the out-of-area use of force and increased the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. The spread of nuclear weapons to certain regions has added to the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in our world.

The sponsors believe that the Conference on Disarmament has an important and vital task to reverse the progressively negative trends regarding the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The call in draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.36 for effective international arrangements is even more urgent and important today than in the past. The achievement of an unconditional and legally binding commitment by all nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State would have the following positive effects: it would reduce the danger of the use of nuclear weapons; it would constitute an important confidence-building measure among nuclear-weapon States; it would provide greater credibility for the endeavours to halt nuclear proliferation; and it would facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

The sponsors trust that the Conference on Disarmament will re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances early next year and that it will make rapid progress towards reaching the vital objectives set out in this draft resolution, which we hope will be adopted with the widest possible support.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): The South African delegation wishes to strongly support the adoption of the draft resolution circulated as document

A/C.1/55/L.44, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", introduced this morning by the delegation of Norway on behalf of the sponsors. The mine ban Convention continues to set new standards in disarmament. More than 100 States having ratified or acceded to the Convention in less than three years is a record-breaking achievement.

South Africa welcomes the successful Second Meeting of States Parties to the mine ban Convention, which reinforced the commitments by States parties to completely and fully implement the provisions of the Convention. These commitments are evident in a continued eradication of anti-personnel mine stockpiles and a decrease in mine victim casualties, while funding for mine action programmes is rising. Moreover, the international norm established by the Convention is having a global impact, as trade in these weapons has almost disappeared and production has declined dramatically. Furthermore, the inclusive nature of partnerships between Governments and civil society in the creation of the Convention has been maintained and reinforced through the standing committee of experts. An enormous amount of implementation work has been done effectively through this mechanism with minimum cost implications.

Anti-personnel mines, however, continue to be used in conflicts around the world and continue to maim and kill innocent people long after conflicts have been resolved. The impact of these indiscriminate weapons also impedes socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries. So as to completely rid the world of these terrible weapons, South Africa continues to believe that all Governments have a responsibility to accede to this Convention as soon as possible. It is for this reason that we strongly support this draft resolution, which again calls on all States to ratify the Convention without delay and for States and other relevant parties to work together to promote, support and advance the care, rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of mine victims, mine awareness programmes, the removal of anti-personnel mines placed throughout the world and the assurances of their destruction. We wish to echo the Norwegian delegation's call that maximum support again be given to the draft resolution on this subject.

The Chairman: If no other delegation wishes to speak at this stage, I would ask that delegations introduce the remaining draft resolutions to the Committee as soon as possible since there are only two more meetings for this phase of our work.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.20

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee

20th meeting

Friday, 20 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Guani .... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Guani (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia has the honour to take the floor on agenda item 75 (w), entitled "Small arms", on behalf of the Rio Group of countries.

The Rio Group commends the efforts of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to combat the stockpiling, destabilizing circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms. In the Americas, the States of the hemisphere have pledged to implement the provisions of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials and to cooperate among themselves to prevent, and ultimately to eradicate, these scourges.

In addition, within the framework of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, these same States have pledged to implement the model regulations, which fulfil a complementary function in the implementation of measures to ensure that the trade in firearms, parts, components and ammunition can be carried out only under strict control at the points of exportation, importation and transit.

A number of initiatives designed to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and to reduce their stockpiling and excessive circulation are also under way in other regions and subregions. These regional initiatives reflect the growing concern of the international community at the consequences of uncontrolled proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms for peace, security and social and economic development in many countries and regions. Nevertheless, this concern should now also be reflected in the attitude of those countries that, because of the absence of a global regime to regulate and monitor the production, distribution, exportation and importation of these arms, still permit their transfer without major restrictions, thereby facilitating access to the small arms market by groups and individuals who operate outside the law, and fostering corruption among those who take advantage of the situation to make huge profits. More than the excessive stockpiling of small arms, which cannot have such consequences when arms are strictly controlled by the State, the countries members of the Rio Group are concerned by the easy availability of these arms in the international market place, their indiscriminate circulation among the civilian population, their use in violent and criminal actions and, in particular, their illicit trafficking, which, as a result of the lack of effective control by States over their production and trade, has the most destabilizing consequences. Of the enormous quantity

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of small arms circulating in countries where armed conflicts have ended, many weapons reach other countries through clandestine and illicit channels.

That trend must be stopped through actions aimed at preventing traffickers and criminals from gaining access to and easily obtaining these arms. Otherwise, the arms in circulation will continue to be used in illegal trade, or as currency in exchange for basic commodities, drugs or other illegal products. Despite the progress made in this area, the unequivocal commitment of the international community is needed in order to continue to develop common approaches to the control and monitoring of the trade in these arms, with a view to harmonizing norms and procedures to prevent their stockpiling and destabilizing circulation and to eradicate the illicit trafficking in such arms.

In addition, more must be done to strengthen the capacity of States to combat the manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives through measures such as the establishment of multisectoral committees to coordinate and orient the activities of national bodies and agencies responsible for the control of these arms. In the fight against the destabilizing circulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms, an important role is also played by civil society, which, in addition to complying with the applicable norms and regulations, must also help to foster a culture of peace that stigmatizes the use of these arms and creates greater awareness of the destabilizing consequences of the uncontrolled circulation of and illicit trafficking in small arms.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate the support of the members of the Rio Group for Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos of Mozambique in the excellent work that he is doing at the helm of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Rio Group also welcomes the endorsement of the candidacy of Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia by the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement to preside over that Conference.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): It is my pleasure to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Missiles", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.1. The draft resolution on this subject is being presented for the second consecutive year. In the same spirit as last year, it is centred on the main notion of addressing the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

Missiles are among the main components of military operations and an important consideration in military strategies. Today all major Powers in the world have reserved a prominent role for missiles in their military planning. Missiles are part and parcel of nuclear weapons, as their means of delivery. They are also an effective means of carrying chemical and biological weapons. Similarly, in the conventional field, many countries, as well as military alliances, have defined a specific role for missiles to carry out strike missions and to deter the adversary from launching military offensives.

Recently, concerns have been raised over the development of missiles at both global and regional levels. We share that concern and believe that such development can affect the security environment, particularly at the regional level. However, due to the complexity of the issue, no common, easy approach or solution is at hand. Some partial solutions in place among some countries, through coordination at national levels, may be effective only for some aspects related to missiles, but at the same time would produce other negative consequences. The issue of missiles is a global issue and partial or very narrowly defined measures to deal with missiles are not conducive to generally accepted results. We need to deal with a global issue globally.

The draft resolution on missiles this year is mainly a reproduction of last year's text. The General Assembly last year requested Member States to convey their views on the issue of missiles in all its aspects to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Some countries, including my own, transmitted their views, as is reflected in the report of the Secretary-General. The only new element in this year's draft is operative paragraph 2, which requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a study group to assist him in preparing a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. The mandate for such a group, though quite general, is also quite comprehensive. That, in our view, is the requirement for a good beginning to the process of addressing the issue of missiles at the global level. We believe that the initiation of such a study can prepare the ground for furthering our efforts in the near future to address this issue in a more structured manner within the United Nations.

All of us are aware that approaches towards addressing the issue of missiles are different, and initiatives that have been taken so far have not been taken in any specific framework. Dialogue is lacking in this very important field. This United Nations study group would be the best forum in which to structure a constructive dialogue on an issue about which we all have common concerns. We sincerely hope that, with the broadest support accorded to the draft resolution, we will establish the United Nations study group and commence discussing the issue fruitfully next year.

Mr. Mouro (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and Bolivia and Chile, on the issue of general disarmament.

At the last session of the Assembly, we referred to the main commitments contained in the Political Declaration that established the MERCOSUR countries and Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, signed at the MERCOSUR presidential summit held in Ushuaia, Argentina, on 24 July 1998. The Declaration was circulated as document A/53/297.

At this time I should like to refer to the actions that the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile have taken in order to carry out these commitments. First, we continued to strengthen the mechanisms for consultation and cooperation on matters of security and defence that already exist in the region and the linkages between them. At the regional level, confidence-building and measures to consolidate cooperation and integration have been adopted. For example, a joint mechanism for registering buyers and sellers of small arms was created; cooperation activities in the area of demining have taken place and there have been bilateral meetings between our defence ministers.

Secondly, our commitment to supporting the full application and improvement of the various instruments and mechanisms for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was set out in our Declaration to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), document A/54/833. In the Declaration, we also expressed our intention to carry out all the efforts required to ensure the Treaty's full and universal implementation in order to promote the final objective, a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this context, we welcome Chile's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 12 July last.

Thirdly, we are determined to continue moving forward within MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, towards establishing a zone free from anti-personnel mines and to endeavour to extend that zone to cover the entire western hemisphere. In the past year Argentina and Brazil have issued our national reports on transparency measures in line with article 7 of the Ottawa Convention, and the Government of Chile has started its demining activities in this regard. As well, on 6 and 7 November next in Buenos Aires a regional seminar on the destruction of mines has been organized by Argentina and Canada with the participation of the Organization of American States and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace headquartered in Lima. The objective of that meeting will be to become a forum for debate to discuss the process of destroying stockpiled mines and experience gained in that task.

Fourthly, once again we would like to reaffirm our commitment to broaden and systematize the information we provide to the Register of Conventional Arms and to establish a uniform methodology to provide information on military expenditures. We endorse the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel of Governmental Technical Experts on the functioning and development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and we welcome the bilateral initiative between Argentina and Chile on establishing uniform methodology for reporting on military expenditures.

Fifthly, as a way of continuing our encouragement of cooperation for the exclusively safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy, at the Review Conference of the NPT we expressed the belief of the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile, that nuclear activities for peaceful uses should be carried out on the basis of transparency and in compliance with internationally accepted standards of nuclear safety and physical protection of nuclear materials. We believe that the use of nuclear energy in our region is closely linked to the adoption and implementation of appropriate security measures, which increase confidence that the environment will be respected in the use of this type of energy, thereby ensuring that it will be more widely accepted by our populations.

In conclusion, we would like to repeat our commitment to continue moving ahead in carrying out the objectives of the MERCOSUR zone of peace Declaration, with a view, in the near future, to being able to say with satisfaction that we have fully reached the objectives we have set ourselves.

Mr. Gahona (Belize): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. Latin America and the Caribbean managed to avoid the nuclear race and managed to overcome the occurrence of some localized conflicts that were worsened by the cold war competition with a committed and independent attitude that favoured both nuclear and conventional disarmament. With the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco it became the first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free region. Within the current disarmament context, we are pleased with the active participation of its members in all forums and mechanisms that open up some possibility for total nuclear disarmament, which is rightly interpreted as a goal for all humanity. Aside from that, we share the concern of broad sectors of the international community because of the lack of progress in this process and in the mere definition of the routes that should inexorably lead to general disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

We are also conscious that our problems with regard to security have their own characteristics. We do not yet feel free from conflicts, including low-intensity conflicts nurtured by poverty and marginalization, nor are we completely free from global tensions. That is why the region, without ignoring the maximum priority that must be assigned to the process that will lead to disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, assigns great importance, among other items, to the upcoming negotiations on illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, an item that is close to its own specific social and economic problems and its security. The activities of the Regional Centre have formed part of this regional concern, and its work has expressed the linking of security with development.

All this leads us to congratulate ourselves on the General Assembly's decision at its last session to approve the revitalization of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, supporting specific efforts by some of the region's countries and a regional consensus in favour of this measure. Now, one year after the Centre had restarted its activities, we appreciate its vast range, covered by an integral framework of the concept of peace. Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.17, which I am submitting as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, expresses its satisfaction at the positive effect of the timing of this collective decision. We trust that the draft resolution will once more receive the unanimous support of the Assembly.

With the relaunching of the Centre, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has brought the Organization nearer to our region. The Centre has the general mandate, among other matters, to assist member States in multilateral negotiations in favour of disarmament, in the performance of deliberative activities to adopt rules and agreements, in the promotion of openness in military matters and other measures of trust and in promoting a regional approach to the subject of disarmament in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament. We believe that this mandate is a propitious one and will be highly beneficial for the region, particularly as a preparation for important disarmament and arms control negotiations which will have a marked effect on the subject of regional security. The region assigns great importance to the preparations for and holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001. That is why the draft resolution emphasizes the activities performed this year by the Centre and also invites States to enrich its agenda and incorporate more and more of its activities. Thus, the work of the Centre will respond to the requests and interests of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and their peculiarities within the broad subject of security and development. We believe that an agenda of the Centre that is thus developed will be highly representative and will help us to achieve a common perception of our security problems and in that way provide us with a more coherent position with regard to the problems of global security and development.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of five Central Asian States, namely, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. I should like to introduce, for the consideration of the Committee, the draft resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia", document

A/C.1/55/L.45/Rev.1, which was prepared through our collective efforts.

The text of the draft is very close to the texts of General Assembly resolutions 52/38 S and 53/77 A, which in previous years enjoyed broad support and were adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. The current draft resolution reflects new developments that have taken place in connection with the creation of a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone since that time. We are very glad to see that the issue of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned has found its solid place on the international disarmament agenda. Nowadays it is universally recognized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones enhances regional stability and makes a significant contribution to the strengthening of international peace and stability, as well as firmly upholding the disarmament and non-proliferation process.

We welcome the active involvement of the international community in the process of the development of existing and new nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. Up to the present, these efforts have successfully resulted in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba make an important contribution to maintaining and strengthening the regime of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament, representing an important step towards the realization of the principles and objectives of the disarmament and non-proliferation process and a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 53/77 A on 4 December 1998, the Central Asian countries, with substantial assistance from the United Nations, have conducted a number of intensive meetings and consultations with experts from our countries on the establishment of the zone. As a result of those discussions we have made progress on aspects of a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In this regard, we wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, led by Mr. Dhanapala, and to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, led by Mr. Tsutomu Ishiguri, for the assistance they have rendered in the ongoing process. On behalf of all five countries of Central Asia, allow me to express our sincere hope that this draft resolution, as with similar resolutions in previous years, will find the unanimous support of delegations and will be adopted by consensus during the current session of the Committee.

Mr. Ogunbanwo (Nigeria): Before introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.13 on behalf of the sponsors, allow my delegation to join you, Mr. Chairman, in welcoming this year's group of disarmament fellows, who are on a study visit to United Nations Headquarters in New York in order to allow them to familiarize themselves with the work of the First Committee and the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We hope that their study visit will provide them with an educational experience that will have a positive impact on their future careers.

My purpose in asking for the floor is to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.13, entitled "United Nations disarmament fellowship, training and advisory services" and I do so on behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Japan, Liberia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, the Niger, Pakistan, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, the United States of America, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own delegation.

The decision to establish a United Nations disarmament fellowship programme was taken by the General Assembly in 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The stated purpose of establishing the programme was to promote expertise in disarmament in more Member States, in particular in developing countries. Since its inception the programme has consistently striven to meet the objectives set for it by the General Assembly. An evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the programme has revealed the following: in 1979, when the programme began its operations, it trained 20 Government officials from 20 countries. By the end of this year the programme will have trained about 500 Government officials from more than 150 countries who are now knowledgeable in the field of disarmament and related security matters.

Apart from providing individual benefits to the fellows, the programme has also provided benefits to the diplomatic services of which the fellows are members and to various multilateral disarmament institutions through the well-informed reports that the fellows made. Many fellows have operated in representative capacities abroad as members of the permanent missions of their countries, including as ambassadors. Indeed, several former fellows are in this room participating in the work of the First Committee as representatives of their countries. In 1999 the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed and evaluated the various United Nations programmes. In its report, the Office of Internal Oversight Services described the United Nations disarmament fellowship programme as "the most successful United Nations training programme in the entire United Nations system".

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to all Member States and organizations that have consistently supported the programme, thereby contributing to its success. We are equally grateful to the Secretary-General for the diligence with which the Organization has implemented the programme over the years. It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus when the time comes to take action on it.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on the list.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): In deference to the Committee's valuable time I will speak only briefly in reference to the statement made earlier this week by the Iraqi representative regarding the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). It must be emphasized that the subject under consideration is a purely bilateral issue between the United States and the Russian Federation. It is indefensible for the Iraqi delegation to use this discussion as a pretext for levelling accusations against Israel and its relationship with the United States.

Secondly, I should like to express my delegation's surprise that these allegations emanate from a country that has a well-known record of using missiles to attack civilian populations. We suggest that Iraq not question the need for Israel's missile defence in the light of the fact that Israeli civilians have more than once been the target of Iraqi missiles. Israel should therefore not apologize for being obliged, for reasons that are well known, to protect its citizens from attack. It seems more than slightly ironic that we are being questioned on our need for missile defence by the very nation that continues to threaten us, especially in the light of its President's recent statement in this regard.

Mr. Mohammed (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked to speak in order to reply to the points just raised. It is indeed very strange that the representative of Israel should talk about the disarmament of Iraq when all are aware that Israel has not acceded to the international treaties and conventions concerning weapons of mass destruction, whether multilateral or bilateral. Israel possesses an arsenal that is constantly being developed. It tramples upon all international calls and resolutions of the Security Council relevant to the subject.

It seems that the previous speaker feigns ignorance that in 1981 Iraq was a target of attack. Security Council resolution 487 (1981) called upon Israel to abide by international treaties and to join the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The question of the disarmament of Iraq is being considered by Iraq. Specific mechanisms were established to that end. We are subject to stringent international sanctions and daily attacks without a mandate from the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.21

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
21st meeting
Monday, 23 October 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than .... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: Before calling upon the first speaker on my list I should like to inform the Committee that before this meeting closes I shall briefly explain to members of the Committee the rules of procedure to be followed during the voting that will start on Wednesday, 25 October 2000.

Mr. Thu (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own delegation.

We have tabled our traditional resolution since the fiftieth anniversary of the General Assembly. Our resolution reflects the majority view of the Non-Aligned Countries, although it is not a formal Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) draft resolution. It has been an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) draft resolution since last year, with the broader sponsorship and support of a large number of the NAM countries.

We introduce our draft resolution with a vision of nuclear disarmament leading to the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons by practical concrete steps. We reflect the positive outcome which we achieved at the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We drafted the resolution on nuclear disarmament to reflect present-day realities and priorities, including a call for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date.

Draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41 in its operative paragraphs, inter alia, urges the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems; also urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems; calls upon the nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument on the joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and calls upon all

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States to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein; calls for the conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; calls for the early entry into force and strict observance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); reiterates its call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament early in 2001 and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; and calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

Those are some of the key elements in our draft resolution. Its main thrust is the proposal for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons to achieve the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. I should like to ask Member States of the Committee to lend their overwhelming support to draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, as they did for the resolution last year.

Mr. Mohammad (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes to express its opinion on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41. The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and represents a crime against humanity, according to relevant United Nations resolutions. That is why nuclear disarmament represents one of the fundamental priorities of the international community. The unhealthy international atmosphere that prevails at present, where we see violations of the Charter, the use of force, and interference in the domestic affairs of States, provides additional reasons for strengthening our efforts in order to prepare a convention on nuclear disarmament. That objective is not an academic or theoretical one. It never was a theoretical goal. Nuclear weapons have been used twice against innocent civilians, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the danger of using those weapons still remains, inasmuch as the weapons still exist, unless there is a convention banning their use.

In this context I should like to refer to paragraph 6 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/55/349), where it states that the nuclear doctrines advocated by certain nuclear States are focused on nuclear deterrence and the threat of use of nuclear weapons or the possibility of their use. That is why it is up to all States, especially the nuclear Powers, to ensure that we abstain from the use or threat of use of these weapons. That is why we support the draft resolution as a positive measure to ban nuclear weapons until the day when nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have been totally eliminated.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is convinced that under your leadership our work will head in the right direction and will be crowned with success.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was created on 28 May 1992, I am taking the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12 on activities of the Standing Advisory Committee with regard to regional confidence-building measures which the countries of Central Africa are progressively taking at the regional level in the security arena.

Ever since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 54/55 A of 1 December last year, many decisions have been taken at the various meetings designed to carry out the work for the period 1999-2000. Three ministerial meetings of the Advisory Committee were held in N'Djamena and Bujumbura. One subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa was held in N'Djamena from 25 to 27 October 1999. Moreover, a subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons in the Central African subregion was held from 14 to 16 August this year in Bujumbura. All these gatherings were designed to ensure the effective implementation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa

(COPAX), created on 25 February 1999 in Yaoundé. They are also designed to set in motion the early-warning machinery and the mutual assistance pact entered into in Malabo in February 2000.

Little by little, therefore, security cooperation structures in Central Africa are being set up. Other major projects are likewise under way, notably, the creation of a subregional parliament in Central Africa and the establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

Central Africa is going through turbulent times at present, particularly in the Great Lakes area being ravaged by war with all the evils that brings in its wake, such as the displacement of peoples both beyond and within borders. Subregional initiatives such as those I have already described are worthy of both the attention and support of the United Nations to see to it that peace and development once again take their proper place in that part of the world. That is why I am asking the Committee to express its support and solidarity for the draft resolution by adopting it unanimously.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is taking the floor under agenda item 74 (a) to express its support as a sponsor for draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12, dealing with the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which has just been introduced by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burundi.

Ever since its inception, the Advisory Committee has played a very significant role in promoting peace, security and development in Central Africa. It has proved to be a special way of people working in concert with one another and of strengthening confidence among the countries of the subregion. It has made remarkable progress, and among its achievements one can cite adopting specific disarmament measures, enacting confidence-building measures and promoting cooperation in the security arena as being the most noteworthy. The meetings of the Committee are for the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence and for the upper echelon civilian/military cadres of the member countries and are regular opportunities to get together to work in concert on a variety of specific issues affecting their common security and to devise measures or decide on joint action. In a number of cases, these steps have managed to dissipate tension and reduce insecurity in border areas.

Above and beyond the ministerial meetings, the Committee organizes regular meetings enabling member countries to take a close look at specific peace and security issues facing them and to strive to come up with specific solutions. There was the seminar on concrete disarmament measures, organized with a group of interested States in Yaoundé in July 1998; the high-level seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa, held in Yaoundé in July 1999; the subregional conference on the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms at N'Djamena in October 1999; and, most recently, the subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons, held at Bujumbura in August 2000. All these have led, each and every time, to the adoption of major recommendations or decisions designed to respond appropriately to the security issues identified.

The ceaseless conflicts that for too many years now have been rending Central Africa have brought in their wake countless victims and destruction of all kinds, sowing fear and insecurity and severely mortgaging the prospects for development of the countries in the region. Efforts made by member countries in the context of the Standing Advisory Committee are a clear manifestation of their determination to break out of this vicious cycle of violence, death and poverty and to create appropriate conditions for the peace, stability and security likely to foster development and the well-being of their peoples. These efforts most assuredly are worthy of the support of the international community.

The Committee can be proud of having contributed to laying the groundwork for a real system of collective security at the subregional level, the beneficial effects of which on peace, stability and development in the subregion are already perceptible and will grow stronger over time. The preceding speaker listed the achievements of the Committee, including a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact; the setting up of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, responsible for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts; an early-warning mechanism, conceived as a preventive diplomatic instrument; and a subregional centre for human rights and democracy, which will strive to promote human rights, democratic principles and a culture of peace in the subregion.

However meritorious the efforts of the countries of Central Africa, alone they could not possibly have achieved such praiseworthy results or such promising achievements. My delegation wishes in this connection to express its profound gratitude to the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Department for Disarmament Affairs, for the constant backing throughout of the work of the Standing Advisory Committee. We should also like to thank the group of interested countries for their invaluable support, together with the Member States of the United Nations whose invaluable contributions to the Trust Fund have made it possible for the Committee to better organize its work. The countries of Central Africa hope to continue to benefit from increased solidarity within the international community for the implementation of the major machinery for peace, security and promotion of development already mentioned. A consistent contribution to the Committee's Trust Fund would be an appreciable manifestation of this solidarity and an invaluable support for the cause of peace in Central Africa. We thank all the Member States for their support, especially the delegations in the First Committee, for their solidarity and unfailing support every year for the countries and peoples of Central Africa in adopting the resolution on the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee without a vote. We strongly hope that again this year we will enjoy this support and that draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.12 will be adopted by consensus.

Mrs. Pereira (Brazil): I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.19, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", on behalf of the following sponsors: Angola, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I also wish to acknowledge that after L.19 was printed four new countries — Bahamas, Honduras, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Sao Tome and Principe — also decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution. I should point out that the majority of those 75 countries are members of the four existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

This is the fifth consecutive year that a draft resolution on this important matter has been introduced for the consideration of the First Committee. This year Brazil has been joined by New Zealand as initiators of a resolution that gathered 157 votes in favour at the last session of the General Assembly, a significant increase over the previous year. We express the hope that draft resolution L.19 may enjoy the same broad support.

There have been some important changes to this year's draft resolution from last year's text. A new third preambular paragraph incorporates the concept of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which was highlighted as a main achievement of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and which is at the core of nuclear disarmament efforts and nuclear-weapon-free zone initiatives.

The fifth preambular paragraph recalls the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly on nuclear-weapon-free zones. The reference to the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was withdrawn. New sixth and seventh paragraphs stem from a division of the fifth paragraph of last year's resolution. We removed the word "ultimate" that qualified the common objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, in paragraph 4 the word "ultimate" is also deleted and language consistent with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) "to work for the total elimination of ... nuclear weapons" was added. We are convinced that these expressions should not cause problems to any State party to the NPT. We introduced a new paragraph, operative paragraph 6, that mirrors a concept that has been present in the seventh preambular paragraph since the first year the resolution was introduced. We considered that cooperation among the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones could be enhanced by means of joint meetings of the signatories and parties to the treaties that established those zones. We welcome the efforts being made by the four zones to further their common objectives. We have listened very carefully to the comments of some interested delegations. Those comments are being considered by the initiators and will be discussed among sponsors and potential sponsors later today.

In the nuclear disarmament area, one of the most significant developments of recent decades is the fact that in several parts of the world the nuclear option has already been ruled out. The regional treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, contributed to freeing the southern hemisphere, and the adjacent areas north of the Equator where the treaties apply, from nuclear weapons. The States parties to those treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect. Our initiative is aimed at achieving recognition by the General Assembly, for the fifth consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered as confirmation of the commitments of the international community towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

We reiterate that, as in previous years, our draft resolution does not create new legal obligations. It does not contradict any norm of international law applicable to navigation, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The changes introduced this year do not touch either on the language of the law of the sea or on the core dispositions of operative paragraph 1. We call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols. The idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon-free is a powerful beacon. It adds momentum to the process of nuclear disarmament and bolsters the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We wish to put on record our appreciation of all those who voted in favour of resolution 54/54 L last year. We expect to continue to deserve their support.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: The entry into force of the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and Southeast Asia, the recognition of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Mongolia, the continued efforts of the States of the Middle East to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and proposals to establish such zones in the southern Caucasus and Central and Eastern Europe are all natural movements towards the international community establishing a nuclear-free world. Certainly all these initiatives are at the various stages of implementation. Some regions, which are free of nuclear weapons, have withstood the test of time, others are at the stage of discussion, while some are simply at the stage of an idea being put forward. One thing is certain, the efforts of countries are directed towards establishing comprehensive, equitable security for all. In this connection, the international conference which Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed be held could find the means to remove the nuclear threat and establish a world free of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of global security should supplement the regional efforts being made to increase the effectiveness of overall measures to control weapons and strengthen trust. On this basis, Belarus once again points out the humanitarian aim of the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe. Now, when no nuclear weapons are present in any of the countries of the region, their assuming a legal obligation not to deploy them on their own territories could provide an exceptionally important impetus for further strengthening security in the European family of nations. As before, we are convinced that the initiative of the Republic of Belarus to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe would meet the long-term interests of both the European continent and the entire international community.

The historic opportunity provided to the States of this region and of Europe with the geopolitical progress made at the beginning of the nineties should not be missed. We realize that currently dominating political factors make the adoption of this proposal by the majority of countries in the region difficult in the immediate future. However, we are not losing hope that this noble initiative will be implemented. The Belarus delegation intends to continue the search for agreement on this issue, including at this session of the General Assembly. In this connection we wish to point out ongoing work to prepare a consensus text of the resolution, bearing in mind the position of all sides.

Mr. Hoang (Viet Nam): On behalf of the delegations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) I wish to take this opportunity to express our full support for two draft resolutions under consideration by the First Committee at this session, namely "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/55/L.41, and "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", which appears in A/C.1/55/L.48. We would like to thank the drafters, Myanmar and Malaysia respectively, for their efforts in coming up with these draft resolutions.

First, we wish to emphasize that among the draft resolutions introduced this year on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Myanmar's is the most comprehensive in nature. The ASEAN countries join in co-sponsoring this draft resolution in the hope that the international community will work hard together for the goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to build a world free from such weapons in the near future. We are fully aware that this is a difficult endeavour, and we call for concerted efforts from both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to carry out this task. The ASEAN countries, firm in their belief in nuclear disarmament as expressed in their attachment to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, fully support the adoption of this important draft resolution.

Secondly, we fully commend Malaysia's tireless efforts in upholding the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by introducing the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*". The ASEAN countries attach great importance to the ruling of the ICJ on 8 July 1996, which stated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the rules of international laws that are applicable in armed conflicts, and to its unanimous conclusion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We earnestly call upon the Member States of the United Nations to fulfil this obligation without delay by commencing multilateral negotiations next year leading to the early conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention banning the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Australia has the pleasure of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty" (CTBT), together with Mexico, New Zealand and Japan and another 70 original sponsors as listed in document A/C.1/55/L.37. Since the draft resolution was submitted, the Lao People's Democratic Republic — whose National Assembly recently approved ratification of the Treaty — the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Turkey and Ukraine have also co-sponsored the draft resolution.

The international community embarked upon the project of banning all explosive nuclear tests nearly half a century ago. But it was only when the cold war ended that the international community was able to develop a comprehensive ban. When the time was eventually right for us to do so, the Treaty took less than three years to negotiate. Now, however, the CTBT is in the paradoxical position of both being a highlight of recent efforts on arms control and disarmament and also, regrettably, constituting unfinished business. The conclusion of and strong support for the Treaty, which has firmly established a powerful international norm against further nuclear testing, can be considered to be a major achievement. But four years after the Treaty was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, it has not yet entered into force.

This draft resolution has always had a straightforward aim — to contribute to ongoing efforts to meet the Treaty's preconditions for entry into force. A call for the achievement of the early entry into force of the CTBT therefore constitutes operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution this year. That call, often issued by individual countries, and by the General Assembly each year through this resolution, found a ready resonance at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which recognized entry into force of the CTBT as a key step towards the implementation of our collective responsibilities on nuclear disarmament.

Australia continues to draw encouragement from the progress made by the CTBT Preparatory Commission to establish the international monitoring system, a key component of the Treaty's verification machinery. The global monitoring system represents a large investment by the international community. It will generate significant running costs, but will be the guardian against further nuclear testing. Efforts to ensure the system is operational and effective at the time of entry into force of the Treaty are significant, and operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution recognizes that. Early entry into force of the Treaty would enable us to capitalize on our investment.

Operative paragraph 3 urges States to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending entry into force of the Treaty. Operative paragraphs 4 and 5 concern the prerequisites for entry into force. They call for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty and for those that have not yet done so to refrain from acts that would defeat its object and purpose in the meanwhile. We believe these calls are transparent and balanced. For our part we will respect the call made in our own draft resolution in operative paragraph 6 and remain seized of this issue at the highest political level. Recent efforts at the United Nations Millennium Summit exemplify the type of progress that can be generated by high-level political impetus, and we urge others to continue sending unambiguous signals of support, at the highest levels, for entry into force of the Treaty.

Finally, we express the hope that this draft resolution could be adopted without a vote this year. Its aims are straightforward and transparent. It is intended to deliver entry into force of this crucial Treaty, no more, no less.

Mr. Borrie (New Zealand): It is a pleasure to join with the other lead sponsors — Australia, Mexico and Japan — in putting forward the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/55/L.37. The CTBT is of immense significance for New Zealand. For decades we have been one of the strongest advocates of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as an essential step along the road to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and we worked actively for the conclusion of the Treaty and its adoption in 1996. But the CTBT is not yet in force. It is essential for the enhancement of international peace and security that a universal and internationally and effectively verifiable nuclear test-ban treaty should enter into force at the earliest possible date.

The draft resolution we put to the Committee is transparent and balanced. Its calls are straightforward. Its focus is on the need for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty. For New Zealand, universal adherence to the Treaty has always been crucial. But we believe, nonetheless, that countries which have carried out nuclear tests in the past and which have signed but not yet ratified the Treaty have a particular responsibility to confirm their commitment to the test ban. We very much hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus this year, and we are pleased that it has solid sponsorship, as was the case with last year's resolution.

It is vital and timely that the international community sends an unequivocal signal of support for the CTBT. This draft resolution, which is factual and draws upon sources that have found the widest international support, will achieve that goal.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): Japan welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.37 on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the representative of Australia. Last year Japan was one of the original sponsors of the resolution on the CTBT and is pleased to be able to be so again with this year's draft resolution.

The draft resolution calls for an early entry into force of the CTBT, which is one of the highest priorities of the international community in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this connection it is worth recalling that the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed on the importance and urgency of this matter. Since last year the number of ratifiers of the Treaty has steadily increased and now stands at 65. Through its efforts to promote ratification by other States, Japan has learned that there is a good prospect that that number will grow further in the near future, though the world community still has a considerable distance to go before realizing the entry into force of the Treaty.

Japan ratified the Treaty in 1997 and has been making vigorous efforts to encourage ratification by other countries, including those whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. Over the past year Japan has held high-level talks with some of the key countries in order to engage with them and urge them to take action for entry into force. In this regard we welcome the pledges made by India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Treaty. We also welcome the very recent ratification by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Japan will continue to make these efforts so that the Treaty will enter into force at the earliest date possible.

My delegation also welcomes the moratoriums declared by all the States concerned and would like to emphasize the significance of operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which urges States to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear weapons test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending entry into force of the Treaty. Japan strongly hopes that this draft resolution will be adopted with the widest support of Member States.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.4, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", on behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Angola, Austria, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The sponsors of the draft resolution have engaged the Committee over the past three sessions with a view to giving a new impetus to nuclear disarmament and to securing agreement on an agenda that would become a benchmark for future action in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The pursuit of nuclear disarmament had clearly lost impetus after the end of the cold war. The obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, as required in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, was clearly not being lived up to. Nuclear weapons were being re-rationalized for the post-cold-war period, and the prospect of the indefinite retention of these weapons was becoming entrenched. We were all sworn to nuclear disarmament. We could therefore no longer hide behind the shibboleths of the cold war. The acceleration of the process leading to the achievement of nuclear disarmament was overdue.

The sponsors of the new agenda have challenged complacency in the fulfilment of the obligation to advance the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They have insisted that each requisite step in this process be addressed within the perspectives of an unequivocal commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provided the forum for the elaboration of a set of agreements on the elements and structure for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Most importantly, the Final Document of that Conference fundamentally alters the context in which nuclear disarmament must henceforth be pursued. That context is the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

The Final Document, adopted by consensus among the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), represents a new beginning in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It defines the steps to be taken; it provides for the further development of each of the steps agreed; and it anchors the NPT in a more fundamental way as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Final Document is neither as far-reaching nor as detailed as the States parties were entitled to expect. The compromise it represents reinforces the determination of the sponsors of this text that the steps agreed at the Review Conference shall indeed be implemented without prevarication or delay.

In the draft resolution proposed to the Committee this year the sponsors reflect the results of the engagement both between non-nuclear-weapon States and between them and the five nuclear-weapon States over the past three years. The sponsors are fully conscious that in a number of instances the common ground on a future approach is more generalized than we would have wished. But we believe that real progress has been achieved in setting out benchmarks. These will enable us in future to evaluate the implementation of each of the agreed undertakings. They also provide an agreed basis on which each element can be further developed and defined.

For the sponsors it is imperative that what was agreed between the States parties to the NPT be brought before the General Assembly with a view to its being adopted by the United Nations as a whole. The achievement of nuclear disarmament requires participation by all the Member States of the United Nations. Previous resolutions have set out the concerns of the international community at the prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. They have recalled that the vast majority of States entered into legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons in the context of the corresponding legally binding commitments by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament. They have emphasized that the possession of nuclear weapons must not be considered legitimate indefinitely. They therefore called upon the nuclear-weapon States to give an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and to engage without delay in an accelerated process of negotiations, thus achieving nuclear disarmament, to which they are committed under article VI of the NPT.

The draft resolution before the Committee underlines the fundamental significance of the unequivocal commitment that the nuclear-weapon States have now made to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons. It also sets out the agreed elements for the process of negotiations that will be required to achieve that goal, and it calls for the urgent implementation of each of the agreed steps. It expresses deep concern at the continued risk represented by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used. The draft resolution also acknowledges the steps that have been taken by the nuclear-weapon States, but it underlines the fact that despite reductions the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and in stockpiles still amounts to many thousands. It must also signal the international community's concern that nuclear arms reductions are currently stalled.

The draft resolution sets out the measures that the nuclear-weapon States must undertake, as well as those instruments that the non-nuclear-weapon States, working with the nuclear-weapon States, must accomplish. It calls for the development and implementation of interim measures so as to lessen the role of nuclear weapons in security policies of concerned States and to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems. It reinforces the paradigm of irreversibility as we progress towards nuclear disarmament, and it urges greater transparency to support further progress on nuclear disarmament.

At the sixth Review Conference the parties to the NPT urged the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. They agreed on the necessity of negotiations on a fissile material treaty, and they agreed on the necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. These agreements underline the continuing validity of a multilateral role in the field of nuclear disarmament, which is central to the approach of the sponsors of this draft resolution.

The non-adherence to the NPT of three Member States of the United Nations, which operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, is a matter of ongoing concern to the international community. The draft resolution calls for universal adherence to the Treaty and for those three States to bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements and to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear-weapon development or deployment.

Every process, particularly one as complex as nuclear disarmament, requires constant monitoring and adaptation. Draft resolution L.4 sets out a comprehensive programme of action. Some steps have to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States, some by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, and some by all States. There is an imperative built into this approach that requires results in each of the segments of action. The sponsors are determined to monitor the achievement of these results in the light of the unequivocal commitment recently made. The sponsors are also intent on elaborating on each of the elements that make up this programme of action so that genuine progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament can be registered in future years. The draft resolution recalls the resolve of our heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit to keep all options open for achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

In the year 2000 we have in our possession the beginning of what must become a sustained offensive on the scourge to humanity represented by the existence of nuclear weapons. It is the expectation of the sponsors of the draft resolution that the Committee, in adopting this draft resolution, will reflect the will of our constituency, the peoples of the world, that we can achieve a global ban on the development, production, transfer and use of nuclear weapons within this generation.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Let me briefly recount my country's views of the key nuclear disarmament issues currently before us. We are considering draft resolutions, the stated aim of which is to assist the international community to reach the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. These draft resolutions seek to use as their basis the consensus results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Review Conference was important, because for the first time it produced a comprehensive and substantive Final Document by a true consensus. The Final Document charts a realistic course for the future and indicates the direction for progress on all substantive issues involving the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The United States, for its part, will seek to move forward on the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament agenda set forth in the Final Document.

Much attention has been focused on the practical steps listed in the Final Document. Some of the nuclear-disarmament-related draft resolutions before us are said to be aimed at translating the commitments in the Final Document into early practical action. We do not question the motives behind these initiatives, but let us remember that the outcome of the NPT Review Conference was the product of delicately balanced compromises. Taking individual disarmament measures out of their context in the Final Document, or attempting to expand the undertakings given in the Review Conference results, can only endanger the Conference's hard-won consensus.

The United States believes that the NPT Review Conference consensus charted a course for the future. It did not create a basis for seeking a more expansive disarmament agenda. The United States will evaluate proposals to follow up on the NPT Review Conference results by how faithfully they reflect the Conference consensus. We all agree that the practical steps included in the Final Document need to be implemented, but if we create endless permutations of the concepts the Document contains, we will only blur the goals we are seeking and make them harder to achieve.

A number of actions related to article VI of the NPT have already been taken since the Review Conference ended in May. President Clinton and Russian President Putin have met three times, and during the Millennium Summit they agreed on a Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative as a constructive basis for strengthening trust between the two sides and for further development of agreed measures to enhance strategic stability. In June the two Presidents announced the completion of a bilateral agreement on management and disposition of nuclear-grade plutonium withdrawn from their respective nuclear-weapon programmes and declared excess to defence purposes. That agreement will help to ensure the irreversibility of nuclear-weapons reductions by requiring that 68 tons of plutonium — 34 tons from each country — be disposed of in a manner that precludes its re-use in nuclear weapons.

As we look to the implementation of practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, we should recall that the fissile material cut-off treaty — a measure that all of us have accepted as the next item of business for multilateral negotiation — remains a prisoner of political manoeuvring. It is now seven years since the General Assembly adopted its consensus resolution supporting the treaty, and five years since member States of the Conference on Disarmament agreed on a mandate in Geneva. That consensus was confirmed only two years ago in the First Committee and by all the NPT States parties at last May's Review Conference. A universal, verifiable cut-off of fissile material production from a date certain is the essential next step if we are to make concrete progress on the agenda outlined in the NPT Review Conference Final Document.

Absent progress on a cut-off treaty, there is no incentive to consider other proposals for multilateral nuclear arms control. Yet two, or perhaps three, States in the Conference on Disarmament continue to frustrate the efforts of a succession of Conference Presidents to achieve an agreement that will get serious treaty negotiations started. One excuse after another has been offered for not permitting the treaty to go forward, from the need to curb a non-existent arms race in outer space to the United States initiative for limited national missile defence. President Clinton's announcement on 1 September that he would leave a decision on national missile defence deployment to a successor means that there are now no more excuses for delaying action in the Conference on Disarmament. We now have more time to meet our friends around the world, explain why we believe that a national missile defence is needed and why a national missile defence as we envisage it will strengthen, not threaten, strategic stability.

In any case, it is long past time for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to get under way, and as the Final Document states, they should begin immediately. Let us get the record straight: a national missile defence, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and outer space are not the problem. The real problem is the unwillingness of two or three Conference on Disarmament members to agree to move forward on a cut-off treaty. The real issue is obfuscation, delay and disingenuousness. Those who have no strong commitment to an enterprise can always invent imaginary problems, blame others and work to hide behind the reality that they may not really be serious about moving ahead at all.

A draft resolution on the ABM Treaty has again been introduced at this year's General Assembly. The United States believes that President Clinton's national missile defence decision, as well as other factors, should have made this unnecessary. That resolution was a source of fruitless contention last year. We continue to believe that it is inappropriate for the General Assembly to insert itself into an ongoing discussion about implementation of an international agreement among the parties to it. The draft resolution also takes the highly dubious position that the ABM Treaty should not be amended, even though the Treaty specifically provides for it. Moreover, it invites the General Assembly to take sides in the argument. In our view these issues are for the Treaty parties to decide themselves.

Several months ago the United States suggested to the main sponsor of this draft resolution that we did not need a resolution on the ABM Treaty this year. If a resolution on issues related to strategic stability were needed, there was more than enough agreed, non-controversial language from which one could be created. For example, the five permanent members of the Security Council issued a statement on 1 May that addressed these issues. The United States and Russia have also issued three strategic stability statements, including one that was signed by both Presidents.

The ABM Treaty was negotiated and signed in a different era and under different political and military circumstances. The amendments the United States is proposing will bring the Treaty up to date and enable it to continue to fulfil its purposes. These purposes are to ensure that the strategic nuclear deterrent forces of neither the United States nor Russia is threatened by missile defence capabilities of the other, and to make it possible to continue our mutual reductions in strategic offensive arms. The ABM Treaty of 28 years ago did not contemplate the new threats that are now emerging. If the ABM Treaty were to fail, the responsibility would rest with those who insisted that it had to remain static and could not be adapted.

The United States is disappointed that its more cooperative approach to this draft resolution was rejected. We will again oppose the draft resolution and urge other delegations to do so. Far from strengthening the ABM Treaty or strategic stability, this draft resolution contains dangerous precedents and special pleading. United Nations Member States need to move beyond this kind of rhetorical posturing if our work is to be relevant to the realistic pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. De la Fortelle (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to take the opportunity of the thematic discussion to take the floor on behalf of the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and my own country, to introduce, under agenda item 75 (d), "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research", a draft resolution presented by France in document A/C.1/55/L.3/Rev.1, entitled "Twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research".

It is worthwhile recalling why my country — as it did in 1990, 10 years ago — wished once again to introduce this draft resolution. During the tenth special session of the General Assembly — better known as SSOD-1, the first special session devoted to disarmament — in 1978, the President of the French

Republic proposed to the Secretary-General the creation of an independent United Nations institute for disarmament research. It was ratified during the session and came into being in Geneva in 1980. It had a light yet efficient structure. After a difficult beginning it then found its cruising speed. Then, on a French initiative, the General Assembly was able to adopt by consensus resolution 45/62 G, on 4 December 1990, marking the tenth anniversary of the Institute.

At the time when the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) celebrates the twenty years since it was created, we cannot pass up the opportunity to note our appreciation for the work it has already carried out, encourage it to continue and call the attention of the Secretary-General to the need to seek, in the context of existing resources, ways and means to increase the financing for the Institute. I must say that my task is easier now. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, put forward this idea when he spoke to us at the beginning of our work last October, when he declared from the rostrum:

> "The Committee also has solemn responsibility to remain vigilant about emerging issues, a task that is performed with the assistance of another important component of the United Nations disarmament machinery: the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary. I congratulate its Director, Patricia Lewis, and her small but dedicated staff on their enriching the disarmament community with high-quality research." *(A/C.1/55/PV.3, pp. 7 and 8)*

So I can do no better in paying tribute to the entire team at UNIDIR than to quote the Under-Secretary-General.

Before concluding, I wish to thank the 70 sponsors who have gone along with this text, and to express the wish that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Issa (Egypt): I have pleasure in presenting the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", document A/C.1/55/L.29. Since 1994 the General Assembly has adopted the resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This draft resolution, which is presented by Egypt and other sponsors, enjoys the overwhelming support of Members of the United Nations. It conveys the concern of the international community over the continued presence of unsafeguarded nuclear activities in the Middle East and the resulting risk of nuclear proliferation in the region.

This issue is of particular importance and priority today, since all countries in the Middle East except Israel have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and have accepted comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on their nuclear activities. The draft resolution extends to Israel the invitation to join the 182 States that have renounced the nuclear-weapon option, an invitation whose acceptance has become an obligation that members of the international community are obligated to pursue if the NPT is to remain a credible instrument and continue to have non-proliferation value.

On 19 May 2000 the international community took a leading step in addressing this concern in the 2000 NPT Review Conference by distinctly recognizing the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East and emphasizing in explicit and unequivocal terms the importance of Israel acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. The consensus Final Document adopted by the Review Conference is a positive contribution to all non-proliferation endeavours in the Middle East. The draft resolution before the First Committee this year flows from this consensus. It faithfully reflects principles and language that were accepted and adopted by all NPT States parties in May 2000, just five months ago.

There are certain changes to the draft resolution which build entirely on the language contained in the consensus Final Document. They are a new sixth preambular paragraph that recognizes the commitment of the States parties to the NPT to achieve the universality of the Treaty, and a new eleventh preambular paragraph that stresses the need to advance towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and for all States in the region to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. A new operative paragraph 1 reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East. Operative paragraph 2 calls on Israel to accede to the

NPT, thereby accepting the same obligations that have been entered into by all States of the region.

Draft resolution L.29 is not of a confrontational nature; rather it prompts Israel to accept the same legally binding non-proliferation commitments that have been accepted by all other States of the region, indeed by 182 States already, and to refrain from any action which could undermine regional and international peace and security. The universality of the NPT in the Middle East is the message of the draft resolution. It was deemed an urgent priority by the 1995 decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and was reaffirmed by the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

All States that are parties to the NPT and that participated in the 2000 Review Conference are urged to support this draft resolution. To do otherwise would be a mockery of the Final Document adopted by them in May 2000, and would give the message that selectivity should be the norm in arms control activities. We urge all Members of the United Nations as well as States parties to the NPT to transmit a clear and forceful message through the General Assembly affirming their commitment to the world of nuclear non-proliferation, a message that would also reflect that the consensus achieved only five months ago at the Review Conference is respected and that there will be no double standards when it comes to addressing the risk of nuclear proliferation.

We have witnessed over the past three weeks a deterioration in the political situation in the Middle East of terrifying proportions. Despite that, we continue, as we have always done, to approach the issue of non-proliferation in the Middle East as it relates to the security arrangements in the region, indeed as a prerequisite to any future regional security arrangement there. This approach is distinct from the political settlement of the Middle East conflict through what is known, perhaps euphemistically, as the peace process. We trust that the current situation in the Middle East will not tolerate any leniency or complacency on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, or any other issue, for that matter. The call for prompt action from the General Assembly must be unequivocal and unwavering, because the question at hand is the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and the credibility of States that profess support for this regime.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): In our general statement I had the occasion to note that this year the graph of hope for disarmament and non-proliferation seemed to have risen, mainly due to the consensus reached at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and due to the wise decision taken by the President of the United States to defer deployment of national missile defences. Pakistan hopes that the unequivocal commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons given at the NPT Review Conference will indeed be implemented, although Pakistan is not as optimistic about the prospects of such implementation as some of our friends seem to be.

Our positive and constructive response to the outcome of the NPT Review Conference reflects Pakistan's evaluation that there is no difference in the essential objectives of Pakistan and the international community with regard to the promotion of international peace and security, especially in South Asia. Our objectives, and those of the international community as we understand them, are to lower tensions and avoid war in South Asia, prevent nuclear escalation, promote regional stability and seek equitable solutions to underlying disputes and problems, especially the Kashmir dispute. Unfortunately, like Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), the outcome of the NPT Review Conference dealt with South Asia partially and inequitably. We have stated that several aspects of the Conference's decisions are such that we must express our strong disagreement with them.

First, we note that the Conference dealt with the security situation in South Asia in several parts of the Final Document. To ensure fair and implementable decisions the NPT parties should have invited the concerned countries to participate in any discussions and negotiations on South Asian security issues and should have provided them an opportunity to participate on an equal footing. My country does not accept ex parte pronouncements which impinge on our national security. Also, the Conference's pronouncements on South Asia are deficient in substantive terms on several counts. There is criticism of the 1998 nuclear tests. Pakistan did not initiate the nuclear tests in South Asia. We had every political and legal right to respond to our neighbour's nuclear tests. While its tests destabilized the security environment in South Asia, Pakistan's tests restored the nuclear balance. Therefore, we cannot accept formulations that fail to make the distinction between the ambitions of the first and the compulsions of the other.

Pakistan has never sought recognition for its nuclear capability from anyone, but we will never compromise or concede our ability to deter nuclear or other aggression against Pakistan from any quarter. While the NPT consensus says that the nuclear tests in South Asia did not confer status, I would submit that the political effect of making such an assertion is exactly the opposite. Indeed, another implication of making this assertion is the confirmation that the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT do have such status and thus the justification of their possession and retention of nuclear weapons. Certainly that was not the intention of the majority of the NPT parties. If the tests of 1998 were to be criticized, why did the NPT parties not find it possible to criticize the tests that had taken place previously, a few years before, or a decade before that, which contributed immensely to the proliferation of nuclear weapons? That was a manifestation of the discriminatory nature of the provisions relating to South Asia in the document.

The inclusion in the NPT document of provisions based on Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) is, in our view, meaningless and irrelevant. That resolution has been overtaken by the realities created in South Asia by our neighbour. Despite Pakistan's persistent endeavours for non-proliferation, nuclear weapons are now a reality in South Asia because of the refusal of the great Powers to restrain our neighbour's progressive nuclear escalation. Most nuclear-weapon States appear to have acquiesced in the nuclear and military ambitions of our neighbour. In any case, they have not actively supported Pakistan's proposals for nuclear and conventional restraint and the resolution of outstanding issues in South Asia. Pakistan's proposals are the most realistic basis on which to promote durable security, stability and arms control in South Asia and to promote non-proliferation in South Asia.

Furthermore, the decisions of the Review Conference have made discriminatory demands on South Asian countries to accept a fissile material production moratorium. That call was not made either on the five NPT nuclear-weapon States or on States in other regions of the world. Pakistan has joined the international consensus that a ban on the production of fissile materials can be achieved only through a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, but we will not accept an obligation that is in advance of the conclusion of these negotiations, especially one that is arbitrary and inequitable.

It is also strange that the NPT Conference not only called for the immediate commencement of negotiations on the so-called fissile material cut-off treaty, which we accept, but also emphasized its conclusion "within a period of five years". We do not accept artificial deadlines, as we stated in our general statement. Calls for such time-frames would have become more credible if there was also agreement for time-frames for the elimination of nuclear weapons and for the conclusion of measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. All these matters that I have mentioned impinge directly on Pakistan's vital security and national interests, and we are obliged to reject them.

Apart from the direct and unacceptable references to South Asia, we note that the NPT consensus also has certain significant omissions. Most importantly, there is no reference to the one issue that is likely to threaten strategic and regional stability, and that is the plan by certain States to deploy ballistic missile defence systems. Equally, while a time-frame is indicated for the cut-off treaty, there is no similar time-frame for the steps towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

For all these reasons the Pakistan delegation will not find it possible in the Committee to support any draft resolution that welcomes the results of the NPT Conference or incorporates the discriminatory and unacceptable elements of its decisions that I have mentioned.

Mr. Kaba (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): In taking the floor once again I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau, on the masterful skill with which you have been guiding our work. I should also like to express to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, how very much we appreciate the clarity and relevance of his opening statement, which enabled each and every one of us to get a precise idea of exactly where the disarmament issue now stands.

As a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.11, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", my delegation supports with real interest the presentation by the representative of Mali to the Committee. Indeed, the international community, notwithstanding the significant strides recorded in a variety of arenas, still finds itself faced with numerous challenges that continue to jeopardize international peace and security, thus compromising the durable development that our countries strive for so much. Among these challenges we must cite the alarming proliferation and circulation of light weapons, which bring destabilization of our countries in their wake. The Committee will therefore understand how much importance my delegation ascribes to the draft resolution so that the international community will take more directly into account the efforts of States against this scourge.

Our deliberations are occurring at a time when, since 1 September of this year, my country has been the target of deadly attacks by armed bands coming from neighbouring countries in conflict. That is why Guinea sees, not without concern, in this illicit circulation of light weapons a serious threat to its own security and to the stability of the entire West African subregion of which it is part. In that light, my delegation believes it is essential that the efforts of our States to promote peace and development should be further supported by strengthening and promoting the process of economic integration begun by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). That said, my country appreciates quite rightly the recent visit by a major delegation from the Security Council to our subregion, which is facing real destabilization spawned by the circulation of light weapons due to the persistence of these conflicts, the serious consequences of which will, without a doubt, prove catastrophic for all our States if an appropriate response is not found to deal with them.

With the ill-considered accumulation and illicit circulation of light weapons in West Africa we see the spectre of violence becoming more threatening. The situation today has led to a significant deterioration in the climate of confidence and good relations among many countries, which is harmful to the consolidation of peace and security in our subregion. In this context the support of the United Nations for the efforts of ECOWAS in the quest for peace and conflict prevention will contribute substantially to promoting a concerted approach among the different States and the variety of actors in designing an approach grouped around common goals likely to promote and progressively strengthen the dynamic process of integration indispensable to stability and the harmonious development of our States. Along these lines, the Bamako Moratorium, the "Flame of Peace" of Timbuktu, Mali, and of Agadez in Niger, as well as similar steps involving the collection and destruction of light weapons carried out in South Africa, demonstrate the same resolute determination of our countries through real action to halt by all means the illicit circulation of light weapons and to foster a better climate of greater confidence among the countries.

As the Committee is aware, wherever peace and justice are violated, real human tragedy is the eventual result. I have in mind here refugees — these men, women, children and aged persons, innocent victims of these crises — forced to go into exile and to seek housing and shelter elsewhere. It is in regard to this situation that the Guinean Government, having established the National Committee on Light Weapons, is working tirelessly to carry out participative community development projects and programmes likely to help in the eradication of the root causes of this traffic and these conflicts, thanks to the support of the international community through the United Nations and other development partners.

It is in the same context that we see the second support conference on stability and sustainable development in Guinea, soon to be held under the aegis of the United Nations with the involvement of lenders. It will certainly enable my country to cope with the numerous constraints linked to our being an immediate neighbour to countries in conflict. As we have said from time to time, Guinea, which is paying the heavy price of the adverse impact of more than a decade of crisis along its borders, can only welcome the holding of the upcoming international conference on small arms and light weapons. In this perspective, my country will continue, together with other States, resolutely to work towards devising and implementing a comprehensive, strict system designed to regulate the transborder circulation of light weapons. That is another way of saying that my delegation's support is based upon our firm conviction that as long as that scourge is not put behind us, peace and security will remain under threat.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Arab Republic of Egypt has submitted a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, including the

Syrian Arab Republic. My delegation supports the draft resolution, convinced as it is that the situation of tension prevailing in the Middle East requires a greater effort on the part of the international community in order to oblige Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In this respect I wish to say once again that there is no reason to justify the fact that Israel insists on not acceding to the NPT, since today more than 182 countries are parties to it, including all the Arab States, without exception. The results of the Review Conference held recently at United Nations Headquarters in New York represent the international community's recognition of the need to put an end to nuclear proliferation, which represents a considerable threat to international peace and security. The message sent out by the NPT Review Conference is extremely clear, and there is no need to interpret it in various ways. The only interpretation is the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Conference demonstrated the serious resolve of the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons and not to accept any justification for not acceding to this extremely important Treaty. Justifications presented by Israel, including its allegations regarding security for the population during the peace process, are unacceptable. The Arab populations are those most in need of security, especially since Israel possesses the most lethal and sophisticated conventional and chemical weapons in the world.

The Middle East region today is seeing the escalation of tension following the actions perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people, Israeli threats against the Arab countries, and the obstacles placed by Israel on the path to peace. Thus we hope that the international community will strive to convince the only country in the Middle East still not a party to the NPT to adhere to that Treaty. The Arab summit which ended its work yesterday in Cairo appealed to the international community and asked Israel to adhere to the Treaty and to open its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency inspection.

The lax attitude of the international community vis-à-vis Israel is unacceptable because it represents a danger to the efforts of the international community in this area and could encourage other parties not to abide by the international will. That is why once again we call upon all States to support the draft resolution regarding the nuclear threat in the Middle East, because the draft explains the desire of the Arab States to ensure security in their region and throughout the world.

The Chairman: That completes the list of speakers for this morning. Does any other delegation wish to speak at this stage?

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation is taking the floor to support draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced by the representative of Myanmar this morning. My delegation advocates its adoption for the following reasons.

The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978 accorded the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. Paragraph 50 of that Document calls for the urgent negotiation of agreements for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapons systems, the ultimate goal of which should be the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including their means of delivery.

During the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties reiterated the urgent need for nuclear disarmament. A noteworthy aspect of that Conference was the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to pursue negotiations with a view to completely eliminating their nuclear arsenals. The recently adopted United Nations Millennium Declaration in its section II also emphasizes the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. For these reasons my delegation believes that this draft resolution needs to be supported by the highest majority of the Committee.

Programme of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and the agreed timetable, the Committee will begin the third phase of its work, namely, action on all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 65 to 81, on Wednesday, 25 October, at 3 p.m. As we approach the third phase, I should like to outline the procedure that the Committee will be following regarding voting on draft resolutions. Members may recall that this procedure is outlined in rules 123 to 133 of the rules of procedure of the

General Assembly. I wish now to make a few practical comments.

First, there are a few steps in the voting procedure for action on draft resolutions. At the outset of each meeting, delegations will have an opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions, if any. I underline the word "revised". Then I will call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than in explanation of their position or vote on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster. Thereafter, delegations may proceed to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution, I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote. Therefore, delegations will be able to explain their votes before and after the vote on draft resolutions, but must signal to the Chair or inscribe their names on the list of speakers in advance.

Second, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements in explanation of their votes. They are only allowed to make general statements at the beginning of the meeting, or comments on clusters. If delegations are sponsors of a draft resolution they cannot explain their votes. I think that is quite logical and sensible.

Third, in order to avoid misunderstandings, I urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution kindly to inform the secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins action on any individual cluster. We must know in advance. That includes recorded votes on specific paragraphs. With regard to deferment of action on any draft resolution, delegations should also inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to deferment of action. Again, please inform us in advance.

I should like to explain the indicated timetable for taking action on the draft resolutions. For the benefit of delegations I intend to circulate in advance a list of the draft resolutions to be taken up on specific dates in one week so that delegations may know which draft resolution will be taken up on which date and may seek instructions as appropriate. We have today circulated informal working papers Nos. 1 to 4 listing draft resolutions to be taken up during this week from 25 to 27 October. These papers result from consultations with the sponsors. I hope that delegations will find the schedule circulated in advance to be useful for their necessary preparation and forward planning.

The schedule is, of course, only indicative and is subject to change as required. When there is a need to adjust daily schedules we shall circulate the revised schedule on that particular date. I also wish to inform members that the work of the Committee is proceeding very smoothly and that, with your cooperation, we may be able to finish it slightly earlier than the date originally scheduled, which was 3 November. At this stage we cannot be definite, but judging by the way things are going it seems that we may be able to conclude work slightly earlier.

If there are no other comments, I would reiterate that on Wednesday, 25 October, the Committee will begin action on draft resolutions in clusters following the indicated sequence. Action may be postponed at the request of the delegation with convincing reasons, or because the draft resolution will require a statement of the programme budget implications by the Organization.

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): My delegation wishes to exercise its right of reply on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.29, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". The spirit of cooperation essential for peace is being undermined and strained by the introduction of this draft resolution. It is contentious, divisive and one-sided. Resolutions regarding the complex arms control reality in the Middle East should focus on ways to enhance confidence, not undermine it. This biased draft resolution neglects the fact that the real risk of proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries that, despite being States parties to international treaties, do not comply with their relevant international obligations. These countries are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

In addition, the text submitted to the First Committee has undergone changes and now contains harsher language in relation to Israel. This draft resolution singles out Israel in a manner in which no other country is singled out in the First Committee. Moreover, it undermines the achievement of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons because it takes out of context the delicate balance in which this document was adopted. Israel urges every country and every Member of the United Nations to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): I have a few announcements. Today we circulated informal working papers Nos. 1 to 4. I draw attention to informal working paper No. 2, where it is noted, in cluster 7, that action on draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.10 is to be deferred. In other words, the Committee will not take up that draft resolution on Thursday.

Furthermore, members may notice that document A/C.1/55/INF.2 is an information note by the secretariat listing additional sponsors of draft resolutions. This paper tries to facilitate the work of the Committee by including the names of all the sponsors. However, if more sponsors come in before action is taken, I will read out their names at the time of taking action on the specific draft resolution.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I am asking for the floor to respond to the statement by the delegation of Israel regarding draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.29. The draft resolution is not of a confrontational nature but is rather to prompt Israel to accede to the same internationally legally binding non-proliferation commitments as all other States of the region have done — indeed, as 182 States have done — and to refrain from any action which could undermine regional and international peace and security. In doing so the draft resolution faithfully reflects the consensus reached just five months ago on the importance of universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East and of Israel's accession to the Treaty, a consensus that was shared by all States parties to the Treaty. The draft resolution conveys the concern of the international community over the continued presence of unsafeguarded nuclear activities in the Middle East and the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region resulting therefrom. This issue is of particular importance and priority today, since all countries in the Middle East except Israel have become parties to the Treaty and have put their nuclear activities under the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The Chairman: The Committee will meet again on Wednesday, 25 October, at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 1 to begin the third phase of our work.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.